ATTRACTING AND RETAINING FACULTY AND STAFF OF COLOR IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS: CASE STUDIES OF TWO WASHINGTON, DC AREA SCHOOLS

by
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A dissertation submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with

the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Baltimore, Maryland
April 2021

Abstract

Independent schools in the Washington, DC area have undertaken a number of initiatives to foster a more diverse and inclusive school culture and environment. When it comes to the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color in these schools, however, schools have met with less success. While the number of students of color currently enrolled in DC area independent schools has exceeded 33 percent of the total enrollment, the number of faculty and administrators of color in these schools has consistently hovered around 20 percent. This qualitative, explanatory research aims to identify specific strategies and best practices that schools have employed and could use to attract and retain faculty and staff of color in independent schools. Attention is given to the culture at independent schools as well as to the gate keeping role played by the head of school. Social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) is the primary theoretical lens through which these issues will be explained.

Keywords: diversity, recruitment, retention, independent school, race

Dissertation Advisor: Dr. Eric Rice

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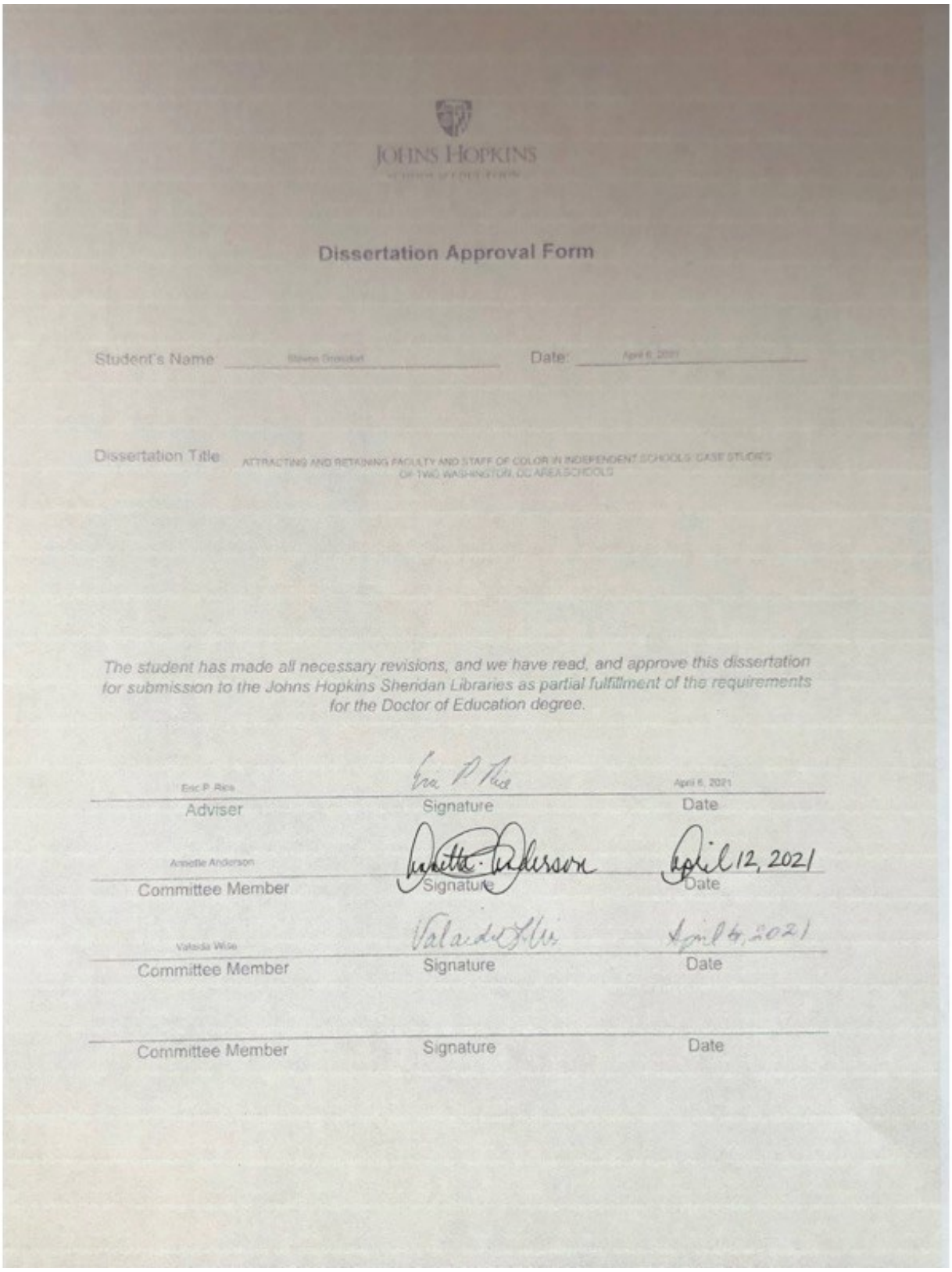

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Dissertation Title ATTRACTING AND RETAINING FACULTY AND STAFF OF COLOR IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS: CASE STUDIES OF TWO WASHINGTON, DC AREA SCHOOLS

The student has made all necessary revisions, and we have read, and approve this dissertation for submission to the Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree.

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my wife, Karen, who has been a support and encouragement to me throughout this doctoral journey, and to my daughters, Sarah and Katherine, who give me hope each day for a brighter future.

Acknowledgements

While the doctoral journey is often a lonely one, this work could not have been completed without the support of a number of individuals to whom I am deeply grateful.

To Dr. Wise, without whom I would not have begun this program. Her leadership, guidance, encouragement, and wisdom were invaluable as I navigated through the initial complexities of my doctoral coursework and then began the more difficult process of writing. She continues to be a friend and mentor. Thank you, as well, for your willingness to serve on my doctoral committee.

To Dr. Rice, my doctoral advisor, who has exhibited a tremendous amount of patience with me as I began, stumbled, pivoted, and finally charted a course forward. He has provided me not only with institutional support and guidance, but also direction when I was feeling directionless.

To Dr. Anderson, for not just serving on my dissertation committee, but for asking the difficult and important questions that helped guide my research.

To my wife, Karen, who has been a bulwark of support from day one. Your passion for social justice and racial equity has inspired and, at times, challenged me to find my own voice and my own place in this important work.

To my now adult children, Sarah and Katherine, who have been on this journey with me for a significant portion of their lives.

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Executive Summary

> If you're not a diverse community and you're not striving to be a diverse community that values others, like you're going to be left behind, you're out of touch, you're outdated, you are closed off from the realities of our world and also missing out on a lot of really awesome stuff that other people can bring to the table. (Interview with member of school diversity committee, January 28, 2021)

Independent schools—generally tuition-charging, non-profit entities governed by a board of trustees and overseen by a head of school—have existed in the United States since the 1600s. Initially established as a means of teaching religious doctrines, independent schools today offer a broad-ranging curriculum, seeking to prepare students for college and beyond. This preparation takes many forms, including ways in which to engage around diversity. While diversity, in one form or another, has existed in the United States since its earliest days, diversity has not always been embraced by independent schools. In fact, independent schools throughout four hundred years of American history have often used their independence to shelter their learning community from becoming more diverse, particularly with regard to race. Some schools, however, have seen the benefits and opportunities afforded them through becoming more racially diverse. What is it about a school that, even in the midst of social and political headwinds, allows it to embrace the power of racial diversity?

A brief history of race in the United States

From our earliest days as humans, we have faced choices around how we were going to engage with one another, particularly around difference. History books, literature, and oral histories are filled with the results of those choices, often detailing the exploits of those with power over those without. More often than not, difference has been perceived as a threat rather

than an opportunity or an advantage. When it comes to the history of the United States both before and since its founding, the concept of difference, and particularly racial differences, followed a rather unique trajectory that revolved primarily around slavery and the plantation system (Smedley, 1997). While this country was founded upon the principles of a democratic form of government—*e pluribus unum* ("out of many, one")—the United States has never been one. As noted by de Toqueville (1835) in his journey through the United States in the early 1800s, "insurmountable barriers" existed between people of different races even in a society founded on principles of liberty and equality.

In the 1860s, a civil war was fought over these principles. The country was forced to come to grips with the gaps that existed between the ideals expressed by these principles and the ways in which the principles were being lived out in the day-to-day lives of its inhabitants. Congress attempted to address these gaps through legislation. While offering glimpses of hope to many who had experienced the horrors of slavery and its aftermath, legislation in and of itself does not change mindsets. In fact, as was seen in the South at the end of the 1870s, those in power found ways in which to preserve their power through segregation, through violence, and through the practice of "separate but equal."

Throughout the early part of the 20th century, a wide range of voices began to speak out against these practices, often at the cost of their own lives. A world war, a global recession, and a second world war focused attention on human rights and the ways in which the United States, held up by many as a beacon for such rights, was falling short in practicing what it was preaching to others. In *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Myrdal (1944) wrote: "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes

on . . .” (Myrdal, 1944, p. lxxix). This report played an influential role in the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) which began a process of dismantling the foundations associated with separate but equal.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the release of the Coleman Report in 1966 were further attacks on that foundation and provided the legislative and research underpinnings to challenge the status quo and the power structures that supported it. History has shown that U.S. society was unprepared for the challenges associated with bringing different racial, cultural, and ethnic groups together that had been alienated from one another through legislative and social forces. New tools and new ways of thinking about diversity were needed, along with champions who were willing to take risks to step into this milieu. As noted earlier, legislation alone will not change mindsets as evidenced by recent history.

Toward an understanding of race, racism, discrimination, and diversity

One way in which to understand the racial history of the United States is through Vygotsky’s work on social constructivism. This learning theory posits that people learn through their interactions with one another. This interaction informs our thinking and either reinforces ideas and concepts we have learned previously or forces us to confront our previous learning. Vygotsky described the ways in which people use labels in order to categorize these ideas and concepts. It is in this process of labeling and categorizing and the ways in which people interact around those labels and categories that concepts of discrimination, racism, and diversity find meaning. This is particularly true in a society in which race has played such a dominant role.

As noted by Feagin (1977), “Discrimination refers to actions or practices carried out by members of dominant groups, or their representatives, which have a differential and adverse impact on members of subordinate groups” (Feagin, 1977, p. 183). In this sense, discrimination

exists whenever individuals or groups are in a position to, and then actually do, act to deny equality of treatment. Racism, then, is a system built upon institutionalized race-based discrimination (Feagin, 1977). Institutional or systemic racism "refers to the foundational, large-scale and inescapable hierarchical system of US racial oppression devised and maintained by whites and directed at people of color" (Feagin and Elias, 2013, p. 936).

As organizations operating within a broader social and historical context, independent schools and those associated with them are not immune from the influences of race and structural or institutional racism. It is reasonable, then, to ask what influence race and racism have had on independent schools.

Problem of Practice

Despite an intense focus on diversity, particularly racial diversity, including crafting diversity statements, establishing diversity committees, hiring diversity coordinators, and evaluating diversity as part of the accreditation process, the number of people of color serving as faculty or administrators at independent schools in the Washington, DC area remains low in absolute numbers and relative to the general population of the area. This lack of racial diversity has an impact on the schools—individually and collectively—and on society more broadly.

The reasons for this lack of diversity in independent schools are many and complex. Some of the reasons are tied to the schools themselves, including their unique history, geography, and community. Some reasons are more systemic, including the self-perpetuating nature of selecting leaders and community members, the gate keeping role of the head of school, lack of career development opportunities, and lingering discrimination.

In the midst of these challenges, some schools have found a way to begin addressing these challenges and are beginning to write a new narrative. This new narrative, focused, among

other things, on sustained intentionality, has allowed these schools to achieve greater success in hiring and retaining a more racially diverse population of faculty and staff members. The problem of practice, and the purpose of this study, is to identify specific practices of these "exemplar" schools that have enabled them to achieve this success.

Needs Assessment

To understand why a school was able to implement policies and practices that allowed it to be successful in its diversity recruiting and retention efforts, it was important to start with the head of school. The head of school is the banner carrier when it comes to the school's mission and is the public face of the institution with regard to its policies and practices. In this context, it is the head of school who sets the public tone for the school's approach to both leadership and diversity. Understanding the head of school's mindset on these issues provided insights into ways in which schools might address the lack of diversity among faculty and school administrators. Therefore, the goal of the needs assessment was to develop a more accurate picture of that mindset by capturing attitudes and perceptions about both leadership and diversity in independent schools.

To explore this problem, I sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What are the factors contributing to a lack of people of color in leadership roles in Washington, DC area independent schools?

RQ2. How do the head of school's attitudes and perceptions about leadership and diversity impact the overall level of diversity at their school?

On the basis of the research questions, an explanatory mixed methods design was chosen for the needs assessment. The purpose behind the framing of RQ1 was to see whether there was alignment between how heads of school thought about their current school culture, practices, and

environment and the realities that existed within their school. To do this, an on-line survey was crafted. RQ2 was more qualitative in nature. Drawing upon both the quantitative responses and the open ended questions in the survey, interviews were undertaken with a representative group of heads who had taken the survey and offered to make themselves available for follow-up. The purpose of the interviews was to help explain the data captured in the survey.

The survey was sent by e-mail to 79 heads of independent schools in the Washington, DC area, each of which was a member of the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington. After two weeks, 34 surveys had been completed. The results of the survey identified a gap between what schools (through their diversity statements) and heads of school say about diversity and how diversity, particularly racial diversity, manifested itself among the faculty and staff at these schools. School leaders talked about the importance of racial diversity, yet the faculty and staff of the schools they lead generally lack racial diversity. While there are certainly a variety of factors that contribute to this gap, the survey and interview responses of heads of school indicated that the attitudes and perceptions of the heads, although unintentional, may be a factor contributing to this gap.

The lack of diversity has several implications related to the ability of independent schools to satisfy their respective missions and fulfill the visions indicated by their diversity statements. As children grow and mature through the critical years of their elementary and secondary school lives, the lack of diverse role models in the classroom and in leadership is a void in their educational experience. In the context of a competitive, global, 21st century economy, this void has implications for the future of the students in these schools and for the schools themselves.

Building on data from the needs assessment, the question shifted from the barriers to greater diversity to the strategies that individual schools have used to achieve greater diversity.

What is it about a particular school's culture, policies, practices, and, in particular, its leadership, that has contributed to this success?

Research purpose and objectives

Social constructivism and Critical Race Theory were utilized together to help unpack both the evolution of independent school culture and the influence of race on this culture. As independent schools and independent school leadership continue to be dominated by Whites and as independent schools operate within the broader context of American society, they are "subject to the same racially motivated practices and policies that permeate the everyday existence of Black Americans" (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010, p. 43). These theoretical lenses were utilized to better understand schools that have developed successful approaches to racially diverse hiring and retention and to explain why these approaches have been successful.

Research design

Drawing on the quantitative and qualitative data contained in the needs assessment, I sought to explain the reason(s) for the success that certain schools are finding when it comes to hiring and retaining a racially diverse team of faculty and staff. As such, an explanatory design was chosen for this research (Creswell, 2011). Given the wide variation that can be seen in independent schools when it comes to the extent of racial diversity present among the faculty and staff, an explanatory approach to this research was helpful in understanding why it is that some schools meet with greater success than others in this arena.

A case study approach was utilized to help explain this phenomenon. Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002) describe the case study as a way for the researcher to "engage in a broad view of causation that permits getting at the many forces in the world and human minds that together

influence behavior in much more complex ways than any experiment will uncover" (p. 500). The case study provided a framework to explore the issues under consideration.

Approach

A multiple-case study was conducted with two independent schools in the Washington, DC area. The two "exemplar" schools were selected based on a defined set of criteria, including evidence of a commitment, in some form, to diversity practices and the presence, based on a review of the school's website, of a racially diverse group of faculty and staff members.

Interviews were conducted with six individuals at each school: the head of school, the board chairperson, the diversity coordinator, a faculty member of color, a staff member of color, and a member of the school's diversity committee. The interviews were conducted over Zoom and were audio- and video-recorded. Each interview followed a similar script, focusing on the experiences and perceptions of the person being interviewed. Interviews were transcribed verbatim using software called Trint. The interviews were edited for accuracy and then coded using an a priori and emergent coding scheme.

Data and Data Analysis

The twelve interviews—six at each school—were conducted between December 2020 and February 2021. Among those interviewed, six identified as male and six identified as female. In addition, six identified as white and six identified as people of color. The average years of service at School A was 5.8 years; the average years of service at School B was 8.0 years. In total, nearly 9 hours of interviews were conducted, which were then transcribed and coded, as noted above.

The codes that emerged started with four main categories or themes, and then broke into several sub-themes:

- an articulation of why diversity is important to the school
    - the relationship between diversity and community
    - how diversity shows up at the school
- an understanding of the role of a diversity "champion"
    - how people think about a champion (qualities/characteristics)
    - roles and responsibilities of a champion
    - the relationship between the champion and the school's mission
- a description of best practices in recruitment
    - existing practices
    - challenges to existing practices
    - emerging practices
- a description of best practices in retention
    - existing practices
    - challenges to existing practices
    - emerging practices

As a multiple-case study, particular attention was given to the similarities and differences in practice at each of the two exemplar schools. Many key words and phrases, as well as best practices, were common to the two schools. That being said, it was apparent based on the length of time during which some of these practices had been in place that the two schools under consideration were at different points in their respective learning curves as related to diversity practices. It was also apparent that unique aspects of the school, primarily driven by history and geography, also played into the schools' approaches to diversity and the ways in which best practices had been implemented.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to answer two questions:

RQ1. Who serves as the champion for diversity at exemplar schools?

RQ2. What practices associated with diversity have had a noticeable impact on the school's ability to attract and retain people of color?

Based on the interviews conducted at two exemplar schools, the head of school plays an important role in the school's diversity efforts, but he or she is not alone in these efforts. Exemplar schools have been intentional in their efforts to distribute the role of champion across the institution, both enabling and empowering individuals throughout the school. While specific measures of accountability may fall to an individual, such as the diversity coordinator, the responsibility for championing diversity falls to many.

In addition, the interviews revealed a number of practices that, taken together, have had a noticeable impact on the school's recruitment and retention efforts as it pertains to people of color. The following 12 best practices emerged from the interviews:

- distribute the champions
- embrace the mission
- embedded the practices
- engage the board
- review the policies
- recognize the "value add"
- expand the search
- pay for the work
- create the safe space

- scan the horizon
- establish the expectation
- acknowledge the pain

Each of these practices, in one form or another, is being implemented by one or both of the exemplar schools in this study. While the context of each of these schools needs to be taken into consideration, the above listed practices have enabled the school to attract and retain a more racially diverse group of faculty and staff than their peers. It is important to consider that these practices do not function in isolation from one another; they operate in an integrated, intersectional way that centers diversity at the school.

Chapter 1

Introduction to the Problem of Practice (POP)

> The advantaged race in America is white. With this advantage comes access to better schools. If you agree with this (and it is hard not to), you start to view independent schools as contributors to American racial inequity. Of course, this does not mean independent school administrators are responsible for racism. They are, however, in a unique position to shift community thinking toward embracing diversity. But progress is slow. (Brosnan, 2001, p. 474)

Written twenty years ago, this critique continues to resonate in today's independent schools. Despite an intense focus on diversity, particularly racial diversity, including crafting diversity statements, establishing diversity committees, hiring diversity coordinators, and evaluating diversity as part of the accreditation process, the number of people of color[1]—in other words, non-Whites—serving as faculty or administrators at independent schools in the Washington, DC area remains low in absolute numbers and relative to the general population of the area. This lack of racial diversity has an impact on the schools—individually and collectively—and on society more broadly. At the school level, the lack of diversity impacts independent schools in several important ways, including a lack of diverse role models for an increasingly diverse student body, diminished opportunities for students and teachers to engage and collaborate with people of different backgrounds, the potential for missing perspectives when it comes to problem solving and conflict resolution, and, in particular, diminished

[1] For purposes of this paper, I will use the phrase "people of color" which is used by the Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington in its efforts to track diversity in independent schools. These categories parallel those used by the U.S. Census Bureau. For the 2013-14 school year, the categories that comprised "people of color" were African American, Asian American, Latino/Hispanic American, Middle Eastern American, Native American, Multiracial American, and Pacific Islander American.

opportunities to expand the base of diverse future school leaders. As American society becomes more racially diverse, schools may find that their lack of diversity hinders recruitment efforts for students and teachers of color. To the extent that enrollment is adversely impacted, schools will find their financial bottom line affected. Brosnan (2001) notes "economics motivates a school as much as mission . . . schools interested in their balance sheets should be interested in demographic trends and what those trends suggest about the future" (p. 476).

Beyond the various interests of the school itself, independent schools are members of and contributors to society more broadly. As such, there is a social justice aspect to the lack of diversity in independent schools. Both nationally and regionally, independent school associations have acknowledged the critical role that their member schools play in creating diverse and inclusive environments for all members of their community. While each school operates with its own unique mission, all schools are expected to "respect, affirm, and protect the dignity and worth of each member of the school community" (NAIS, 2020).

In the context of the broader educational landscape, private schools represent a relatively small segment of the national elementary and secondary school landscape, educating approximately 5.7 million of the 59.5 million children enrolled in public, charter, or private schools in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). In the area within a 20-mile radius from the U.S. Capitol, there are approximately 368 private schools serving children in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade (NCES, 2020). Of these 368 schools, a number are parochial schools that are affiliated in some way with a religious entity that governs their activities and which may have a role in shaping their curriculum.

Another group of schools are independent schools, generally non-profit organizations structured around Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws and governed by a board of trustees.

While the specific responsibilities of the board of trustees vary from school to school, best practices established by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) seek to ensure that boards and individual board members refrain from engaging in the operational aspects of the school (NAIS, 2020). These responsibilities generally fall to a head of school who is hired by the board and is typically the only person within the school to report directly to the board. The specific responsibilities and priorities of the head of school will vary by school, but generally it is the head of school who is tasked with managing day-to-day operations, including recruiting, assessing, developing, and promoting school employees. These tasks may be shared with a senior leadership team, but the final decision in most hiring cases, especially as it relates to the hiring of members of the leadership team, falls to the head of school. As such, the decisions made by the head of school set the tone for the ways in which the school carries out the board's priorities, including the ways in which a school engages with the issue of diversity.

The narrative surrounding the racial history of independent schools is still being written. For some schools, there is a painful legacy of separation, segregation, and isolation from the communities that these schools inhabit. For other schools, there are stories of risk-taking, courage, and bold, intentional leadership. The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify best practices employed by two independent schools in the Washington, DC area that have had success in achieving greater racial diversity among their faculty and staff. While there are a host of factors that contribute to the current situation, the focus of this study will be on the ways in which the priorities set by the board of trustees are carried out by the head of school in conjunction with other members of the school community who are specifically tasked with overseeing diversity initiatives. Furthermore, this study will focus on the language, policies, and

processes that comprise the school culture and how these impact a school's ability to attract and retain faculty and staff of color.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that I am a white male who served in the Washington, DC independent school community for 12 years. While I am no longer employed by an independent school nor living in the Washington, DC area, my past experience provided me with entrée to people and information that others might not be able to access. Acknowledging this, I am aware that blind spots are likely to exist in the ways in which this research was conducted, including both the nature and content of the interviews. Efforts have been made to reduce and eliminate overt statements of bias, but I am all too aware of the ways in which my upbringing and personal experience have shaped and influenced my perspective on this topic. My intention, building on this experience, is to take a critical approach to the current situation with an eye toward both providing information and recommendations toward addressing an unresolved social problem.

Literature Review

Theoretical perspective

Explorations of race and racial diversity have been undertaken through a variety of theoretical perspectives and disciplines, each shedding light on the complexities and intricacies of the topic. Within the context of independent schools, it is certainly possible to study race as a historical or socio-cultural phenomenon or in relation to student achievement gaps. Race could also be explored ethnographically, focusing on the lived experiences of those attending and working in independent schools. Each of these perspectives would contribute valuable information to the formation and perpetuation of school culture as related to racial diversity.

I am choosing to look at diversity from an operational perspective. In other words, how does a school close the gap between good intentions and best practices that achieve results? I am curious about how schools take the lofty objectives found in diversity statements, operationalize them, and gradually move toward practices that increase diversity, particularly racial diversity. The notion of diversity, broadly speaking, is touted as either a core value or strategic priority at many independent schools, and carefully crafted diversity statements can be found on many independent school websites. The challenge comes in the execution of these statements in service of building racially diverse schools. While research on racial diversity in schools has been undertaken in relation to equity and social justice and from a market-oriented managerialist perspective (Blackmore, 2006), this study focused on how schools operationalize their diversity priorities and the impact that such prioritization has had on the school's ability to attract and retain diverse faculty and staff.

As previously noted, this exploration will focus on successful strategies and approaches that schools and their heads have employed to build racially diverse teams within their schools. Under consideration are both the practical steps that schools have taken, but also the more conceptual approaches: attitudes and perceptions that may have needed to be explored and perhaps overcome in order to build more racially diverse teams. Attitudes and perceptions are unique to each individual. These attitudes and perceptions will have been formed over time and through a broad range of experiences. Many of these attitudes and perceptions will be well understood by board members, heads of schools, and other individuals at the school. Some of these attitudes and perceptions may be less well understood, representing blind spots in the school's collective ability to fully satisfy the mission of the school or the school's diversity priorities.

Some of these blind spots will also be unique to individuals, as each individual will have had different experiences and interactions that will have contributed to their own attitudes and perspectives. As individuals explore and confront the state of diversity in their school community, an opportunity exists for an individual to develop a deeper understanding of himself or herself, particularly in relation to attitudes and perceptions around race and around engagement with others. This focus on learning through engagement with others lends itself to a study grounded in social constructivism. Vygotsky (1978), one of the pioneers of social constructivism, theorized that "learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions" (p. 90). Drawing on Vygotsky's work, Ernest (2010) argues that social constructivism "regards individual learners and the realm of the social as indissolubly interconnected. Human beings are formed through their interactions with each other as well as by their individual processes" (p. 43).

While the focus of this research is on best practices found at specific schools, the practices themselves are employed by individuals at these schools who are making very specific choices in a very specific context at a particular point in time. Social constructivism suggests that these choices, and the learning that comes from these choices, are influenced by the interactions that individuals have with one another. Saperstein, Penner, and Light (2013) note that everything is "historically situated, context specific, and subject to both resistance and reproduction" (p. 360). Through my research, I intend to show how schools that have been more successful in diversity hiring and retention have used these interactions to change their school culture and attitudes about racial diversity.

Understanding the historical context in which schools operate today is an important starting point toward understanding the choices that individuals within these schools are making,

particularly with regard to racial diversity. What follows is a brief historical contextualization of race in this country, including ways in which the concept of race has both changed and stayed the same over time.

The concept of race

A discussion about the ways in which humans have engaged around difference could begin at any point in history. When it comes to the history of the United States—before and since its founding—the concept of difference, and particularly racial differences, followed a rather unique trajectory that revolved primarily around slavery and the plantation system (Smedley, 1997). While relationships between the indigenous people of North America and the immigrants from Europe are periodically portrayed as mutually beneficial, there was nothing particularly mutual about the ways in which Europeans gradually pushed Native Americans out of their homes, their lands, and their livelihoods. As Europeans re-settled and expanded their landholdings, they desired a source of cheap labor to work it. The initial sources of labor in the New World were the Native Americans and Irish, but by the end of the 17th century, the demand for labor outstripped the supply. This gave rise to the African slave trade.

Slavery has existed throughout history, with victors in war often turning the vanquished into slaves and re-settling them into foreign lands. The government-supported, systematic, and corporate nature of the American slave trade, not to mention its massive scale, turned slavery into an institution in America. Institutional slavery was rationalized in a number of ways, the most damning being the de-humanization of the slaves themselves. Africans, who came from thriving, organized communities, were considered less than fully human and treated as such as they were transported across the Middle Passage from Africa to America. One of the key points in this ongoing system of dehumanization came in 1787 at the United States Constitutional

Convention when slaves were officially recognized as only three-fifths of a person for representational and tax purposes, a policy that would remain in effect for over 75 years.

In an 1835 account of his travels throughout early 19th century America, French political thinker and historian Alexis de Toqueville wrote:

> The human beings who are scattered over this space do not form, as in Europe, so many branches of the same stock. Three races, naturally distinct, and, I might almost say, hostile to each other, are discoverable among them at the first glance. Almost insurmountable barriers had been raised between them by education and law, as well as by their origin and outward characteristics, but fortune has brought them together on the same soil, where, although they are mixed, they do not amalgamate, and each race fulfills its destiny apart. (de Toqueville, 1835, p. 336)

In America's experiment with a democratic form of government, founded on the principles of liberty and equality, de Toqueville draws attention to what he perceives to be the "insurmountable barriers" that had been erected between people of different races during this era. Time has shown these barriers to be more permeable than not, and even at the time of his writing the mixing of the races denied by de Toqueville was taking place, although by and large out of the public's eye and, in many cases, non-consensually. He goes on to describe his observations of these races:

> Among these widely differing families of men, the first that attracts attention, the superior in intelligence, in power, and in enjoyment, is the white, or European, the MAN pre-eminently so called, below him appear the Negro and the Indian. These two unhappy races have nothing in common, neither birth, nor features, nor language, nor habits. Their only resemblance lies in their misfortunes. Both of them occupy an equally inferior

> position in the country they inhabit; both suffer from tyranny; and if their wrongs are not the same, they originate from the same authors. (de Toqueville, 1835, p. 336)

De Toqueville identifies a few of the features that have come to be associated with race: birth, features, language, and habits. This description provides both a social and historical foundation for the continued exploration of the concept of race. De Toqueville's work describes an interrelationship between and among those occupying the United States that informed and defined their relationships to one another and to the society in which they were living.

With the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, along with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 and the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, slavery officially came to an end. Institutions and those that control and gain power from them are, however, not so easily dismantled. Institutional slavery was replaced with institutional practices that continued to segregate and separate those who represented the different groups identified by de Toqueville. The disenfranchisement of African American citizens throughout the country, but particularly in the South, including the denial of voting and other rights, enabled those in both state and federal political positions to retain and exercise their power.

In order to address these continuing inequities, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, prohibiting states from denying citizens the right to vote. This was accompanied by the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which prohibited racial segregation in accommodation. As previously noted, when those in power feel threatened, they are likely to take steps to preserve their power, and by the end of the 1870s, when the federal influence of the Reconstruction Era on the South began to subside, a particularly insidious form of segregation arose to take its place.

Collectively known as Jim Crow laws, these State and local statutes not only disenfranchised African American voters, but also served to systematically undermine the foundation of African American civil society. The Jim Crow laws coalesced into a doctrine of "separate but equal," which was first introduced in Louisiana in 1890, and affirmed by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). This landmark case, which was passed by a 7-1 majority, laid the groundwork for racial segregation throughout American society, most notably in public schools, a policy that would remain in place for the next half century. It can be argued that the implications of this single court case are still being felt today.

In this social milieu, Du Bois (2012) prophetically stated in 1903, "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line" (p. 17). In his classic work *The Souls of Black Folks*, Du Bois provides a critical update to the observations de Toqueville made almost seventy years earlier:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face. (p. 9)

This American spirit described by Du Bois came into focus during the first half of the twentieth century as the country was swept up by wave after wave of social, political, economic, and cultural upheaval. Two world wars and an economic depression took their collective tolls on

American society. Not only was the construct of "separate but equal" unrealizable, but social and economic factors served to further exacerbate the divide between the races and classes. The underfunding of schools, libraries, and other institutions meant to serve African Americans, coupled with continuing disenfranchisement at the voting booth, stoked discontent among various segments of society. Having been given the legislative baton to enact their own legislation with regard to these issues, states took up the call. During the 50 years after *Plessy*, 17 states, all in the Southeast, enacted legislation requiring racial segregation in schools. During the same period, 16 states enacted legislation prohibiting it. The remaining 15 states either had no legislation in this regard or made segregation optional or limited.

In a report that had a major influence on both the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the civil rights movement, Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish economist, provided an update on the story of race in America. In *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Myrdal (1944) wrote: "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes on . . ." (Myrdal, 1944, p. lxxix). According to Cohen (2004), the Myrdal report:

> served to crystallize the emerging awareness that racial discrimination and legal segregation could not endure in the U.S. Its moral wake-up call for Americans to live up to the democratic ideals of the "American Creed" became a powerful justification that united the major groups responsible for the civil rights movement. (p. 1)

In the aftermath of World War II and the atrocities committed in the name of racial purity, the cumulative effect of Jim Crow laws and racial segregation came into focus, not just in the United States, but abroad. Seeking to establish its moral authority over newly established

institutions such as the United Nations, questions that had been lingering just below the surface of U.S. society began to be raised at the international level about humanitarian policies in this country, particularly toward its African American population. In this milieu, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a newly established international body, created, among other things, to combat racism, issued a statement entitled *The Race Question* (1950). Assembled by notable sociologists from around the world, including Myrdal, the statement—and its subsequent revisions—sought to dispel myths about the concept of race and establish a framework for better understanding the physical and physiological differences that can be observed among humans. While somewhat controversial because of its dogmatic and doctrinal nature, the statement came at a vital time in U.S. history as challenges continued to mount against the doctrine of "separate but equal."

On the heels of the *Brown v. Board* (1954) decision that deemed "separate but equal" to be unconstitutional, and at a time of great social unrest in the U.S., Coleman and his associates conducted a massive study on the state of educational equity in this country (Coleman et al., 1966). Commissioned by the U.S. Office of Education as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Coleman and his team collected data from over 600,000 students and teachers from across the country. While the findings of this report have had a tremendous influence on educational research and policy over the last 50 years, a critical piece for purposes of this paper regarding the question of race is the way in which Coleman and his colleagues defined the concept:

> In carrying out the survey, attention was paid to six racial and ethnic groups: Negroes, American Indians, Oriental Americans, Puerto Ricans living in the continental United States, Mexican Americans, and whites other than Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans often called "majority" or simply "white." These terms of identification are not used in

> the anthropological sense, but reflect social categories by which people in the United States identify themselves and are identified by others. (p. iii)

Following waves of immigration, Coleman's list of races reflects a more granular portrait of the demographic shifts that took place in the United States in the century since deToqueville's writing. Coleman's list signals, in a way, the emphasis that was being given at the time not only to the legacy of slavery in this country on the current generation of African Americans, but to the question of whether ongoing discrimination might have been having an adverse impact on other non-White groups.

The thirty years following the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the release of the Coleman Report were a particularly turbulent time in U.S. history as the institutional infrastructure that had emerged over the first half of the century was both challenged and, in some instances, dismantled. U.S. society grappled with the challenges associated with bringing different racial, cultural, and ethnic groups together that, for over three hundred years, had been alienated from one another through both legislative and social forces. Social scientific research on race, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, and related concepts was finding its way into the mainstream, helping to provide a language with which corporations, organizations, and institutions could prepare for an increasingly diverse workplace. However, this did not mean that race lost importance as a concept.

In their seminal work on the subject of racial formation, Omi and Winant (1994) stake an important claim related to the socially constructed definition of race:

> Race is present in every institution, every relationship, every individual. This is the case not only for the way society is organized—spatially, culturally, in terms of stratification, etc.—but also for our perceptions and understandings of personal experience. (p. 158)

Within this racial formation theory, Omi and Winant (1994) argue that "race exists as an unstable and de-centered complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle" (p. 55). While Allport (1954) suggested that the concept of race, perhaps as a biological construct, is anachronistic, resulting from the "endless dilution of human stocks through cross-mating" (p. xvii), race as a social construct continues to serve as a focal point for conversation and conflict in the United States. To understand the reason for this, we need to move from the subject of race to the subject of racism.

Race, racism, and structural racism

Race, as a concept, derives its meaning once it begins to be applied in a practical sense. Among the most basic practical applications is through speech. Drawing once again upon social constructivism, Vygotsky (1978) states:

> The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge. (p. 24)

The link between speech and practical activity is what gives speech its meaning. According to Vygotsky (1978), "labeling is the primary function of speech used by young children. Labeling enables the child to choose a specific object, to single it out from the entire situation he is perceiving" (p. 32). One of the most primitive and basic ways in which the brain makes use of these labels is to categorize. As social animals, the human brain uses these categories to make meaning of social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). To the extent that the brain is exposed to more categories (social constructs), more building blocks are available to construct meaning.

In earlier times, this process of categorization may have helped early humans stay alive. “Dangerous” versus “not dangerous” or “poisonous” versus “not poisonous” are easily distinguishable categories. As society evolved and different human groups came together to form tribal groups, this process of categorization led naturally into the concept of in-groups and out-groups based on any number of characteristics, including appearance and tribal customs and traditions. Research has now shown that infants as young as three months can begin to differentiate between racial groups (Bar-Haim, Zim, Lamy & Hodes, 2006). Children can sort people by race by age three and begin to develop a concept of membership in a group soon thereafter (Allport, 1954; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001; Paul & Schnidman, 1994; Pauker, Ambady & Apfelbaum, 2010). Membership is bestowed, in most cases, by accident of birth—parents and family relationships, neighborhood, region, nation, religion, race, and traditions (Allport, 1954). These categories become the frames around which in-groups are formed and by which out-groups are defined. According to Omi and Winant (1994), “Everybody learns some combination, some version, of the rules of racial classification, and of their own racial identity, often without obvious teaching or conscious inculcation. Race becomes 'common sense'–a way of comprehending, explaining, and acting in the world” (p. 106). The application of these “rules” and the “common sense” that emerges from them form the building blocks of community. Whether these rules are implicit or explicit, a culture forms within these communities that is embedded with and dominated by these rules.

In the absence of complete information, the brain takes short-cuts in the categorization process. Allport (1954) described this process:

> Life is so short, and the demands upon us for practical adjustments so great, that we cannot let our ignorance detain us in our daily transactions. We have to decide whether

> objects are good or bad by classes. We cannot weigh each object in the world by itself. Rough and ready rubrics, however coarse and broad, have to suffice. (p. 9)

These rubrics, so critical for survival and day-to-day functioning, also provide the building blocks for prejudice, discrimination, and racism. Jennings (2015) says "learned shortcuts can actually impair our adaptation because they interfere with our ability to respond flexibly to various situations" (p. 35). Whereas rubrics (standards of performance) or heuristics (approaches to problem solving) used in the service of pre-judgment may serve a useful purpose, rubrics or heuristics used to disadvantage someone in an unmerited fashion can be considered prejudice (Allport, 1954). In this regard, Myrdal (1944) viewed racial prejudice as "the whole complex of valuations and beliefs which are behind discriminatory behavior on the part of the majority group" (Myrdal, 1944, p. 52).

Discrimination exists whenever individuals or groups are in a position to, and then actually do, act to deny equality of treatment. According to Feagin (1977), scholars have generally attributed the cause of discrimination to prejudice: "Discrimination refers to actions or practices carried out by members of dominant groups, or their representatives, which have a differential and adverse impact on members of subordinate groups" (p. 183). Overt discrimination of the type supported and condoned by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), federal housing administration policies, and Jim Crow laws are examples of the most blatant forms of discriminatory policies against subordinate groups, particularly African Americans, in this country. Lynchings and mass incarceration are just two examples of the more extreme forms of discriminatory actions. The ability to deny equality, to differentiate treatment, or to perpetuate adverse impact is a function of both power (actual or perceived) and resources. Kinlock (1974) described discrimination as "applied prejudice in which negative social definitions are translated

into action and political policy through the subordination of minorities and deprivation of their political, social, and economic rights" (p. 54). Throughout the history of this country, even to the present day, discriminatory policies and actions by the majority white population have been supported and sustained at the local and national level through legislation and the courts.

Racism is a system built upon institutionalized racial discrimination (Feagin, 1977). At the individual level, a person who has been socialized into an in-group may act with discriminatory intent against out-group members representing a race other than one's own. At this level, racism may take the form of verbal attacks, avoidance, discrimination, and physical attacks (Allport, 1954). Institutional racism operates at a different scale, even though some of the actions may be parallel to those found in individual racism. Institutional racism, or what Feagin and Elias (2013) call systemic racism, "refers to the foundational, large-scale and inescapable hierarchical system of US racial oppression devised and maintained by whites and directed at people of color" (p. 936). According to Feagin and Elias (2013), "Racial oppression is foundational to and deeply ingrained in US history and is operational throughout societal levels—group relations, institutions, organizations, power structures" (p. 936).

As organizations operating within a broader social and historical context, independent schools and those associated with them are not immune from the influences of race and structural or institutional racism. Omi and Winant (2009) suggest that "struggles over the meaning of race, both in large-scale political structures and in everyday experience and identity, remain inseparable from struggles against racism" (p. 124). It is reasonable, then, to ask what influence race and racism have had on independent schools.

A brief history of independent schools

The long history of racial discord in this country has had a lasting impact on organizational practices (Hau Siu Chow & Crawford, 2004), including those of the educational system (Tate, 1997). The first schools in the United States were private schools, educating white boys in basic subjects typically centered on religious doctrines. Those girls who received an education were typically instructed in more domestic activities. Spring (1990) writes that the schools that were prevalent in the 16th and 17th centuries in America were focused on maintaining Protestant religious beliefs and ensuring social stability. These schools were generally not available to African Americans, although there is a separate, parallel history of African Americans receiving informal education throughout this time.

As the dust settled on independence and as the nation's population grew, discussions grew around the topics of what it meant to be a citizen of the United States and how the fundamentals of citizenship could be passed along to a new generation born in this country, to the Native Americans already present, and to new immigrants who brought with them their own customs and traditions. In this milieu was born a national system of publicly funded schools in the mid-1800s that changed the playing field for the private schools in place at the time. Crafted by Horace Mann and others, public schools were "the deliberate effort to create in the entire youth of a nation common attitudes, loyalties, and values, and to do so under central direction by the state" (Glenn, 1988, p. 4). While this new public school system was meant to be non-sectarian and embrace children from a variety of backgrounds in what has been described as a benign effort at assimilation, it was infused with a set of values that put it at odds with both established Protestants who were seeking even more influence over the content of the curriculum and a rapidly growing Catholic immigrant population (Glenn, 1988; Spring, 1990). As a result,

Catholic churches, dioceses, and orders established their own network of parochial schools based on Catholic values and traditions.

The very existence of private schools was challenged in the 1920s when legislation was passed in Oregon that sought to address the influence of the rising tide of immigrants to this country following World War I. As was the case a century earlier, these efforts were designed to promote a common American culture. In a significant decision—*Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925)—the U.S. Supreme Court decided that while the state does have a role to play in ensuring an educated citizenry, the state could not force students to receive that education from public schools alone. This decision had a significant impact on the evolution of private schools in the United States. Religious and independent schools were given substantial freedoms to craft both curriculum and policies outside of state interference. These liberties continue more or less unaffected today.

The liberties and freedoms granted to independent schools show up in the history of racial segregation in these schools. In 1848, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools—separate schools to serve African American and White children—were permissible under state law. In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), affirmed a Louisiana law based on "separate but equal" facilities. Over the course of the next sixty years, challenges were mounted to the premise of "separate but equal," particularly at the university level where the state was unable to provide financially for separate publicly-financed facilities for African Americans and Whites. Each of these rulings had direct implications for public schools, but also created the legal framework for segregated independent schools.

Independent schools, with their own Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, are generally exempt from the legal and regulatory requirements of public schools. This independence

essentially permits independent schools to navigate more nimbly with regard to education policies and practices, but it also has also been used to create discriminatory policies that were outside of the reach of the legal system that regulated public schools. This situation changes if a school chooses to receive federal funding. Independent schools may choose to receive federal funding for specific programs or to serve specific populations of students. In those cases, these schools become subject to the same (or similar) federal regulations applicable to public schools. To the extent that a school does not receive public funding, it is generally exempt from these federal regulations. State laws vary in this regard, with schools, especially preschools, often subject to various operating requirements applicable to public schools (e.g., length of the school year, certification and continuing education requirements for preschool teachers, teacher-student ratios for young children, and space requirements for preschool children). The organizational and operational independence of an independent school is, however, critical to its existence. The ability to establish its own mission, along with its own policies and practices, allows the independent school to differentiate itself both from the public school system and from other independent schools. Among these policies and practices is the ability to create boundaries to participation in the school as long as these boundaries adhere to the legal framework in place at the time. Thus, in the years leading up to and even following *Brown v. Board of Education*, independent schools had the legal ability to deny admission and participation to those they so chose. In so doing, independent schools perpetuated a culture of exclusivity. According to Powell (1996):

> alongside a cultural elitism irrelevant and uninteresting to most Americans lurked a social exclusivity very easy to dislike. Prep schools opened their doors to desirable student groups and closed their doors to others. In the eyes of critics such as C. Wright Mills ...

> exclusive prep schools were agents in a conspiracy of the already privileged to perpetuate their privilege forever. (p. 85)

Through intentional policies and practices, many independent schools were successful in establishing and perpetually reproducing a discriminatory culture that supported a privileged class status that was and continues to be dominated by whites. Bourdieu (1979), writing more generally about education as a means of cultural and social reproduction, stated:

> In short, an institution officially entrusted with the transmission of the instruments of appropriation of the dominant culture which neglects methodically to transmit the instruments indispensable to the success of its undertaking is bound to become the monopoly of those social classes capable of transmitting by their own means, that is to say by that diffuse and implicit continuous educational action which operates within cultured families (often unknown to those responsible for it and to those who are subjected to it), the instruments necessary for the reception of its message, and thereby to confirm their monopoly of the instruments of appropriation of the dominant culture and thus their monopoly of that culture. (p. 58)

This can be most easily seen in the aftermath of the desegregation of public schools resulting from the *Brown* (1954) decision, which created the impetus for the formation of a host of new independent schools, ostensibly immune from the desegregation requirements of *Brown* (Brosnan, 2001).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not exclude independent schools. Title VII of the Act specifically prohibited employers from discriminating on the basis of race. Within the context of independent schools, discrimination—by race, by gender, by religion, and by other protected classes—could no longer take place legally with regard to admissions policies or hiring practices.

While many independent schools had already voluntarily desegregated, others were, in essence, forced to confront the policies and practices that had created barriers to participation for non-Whites. It is at this point that the issue of diversity comes into sharper focus.

What is diversity and how do schools view it?

As with race, the subject of diversity has been explored through a variety of theoretical perspectives. For purposes of this study, the lens of social constructivism continues to be informative, as this theory focuses on the creation of meaning through experience (Ertmer & Newby, 1993) and takes into account both social and historical context. It is this experience of diversity and the meaning that comes through this experience in the formation, perpetuation and transformation of school culture that will inform both the needs assessment and the qualitative study that is proposed. But first, what is diversity and why is it important for independent schools?

Diversity is generally synonymous with variety and describes a context or environment in which the various elements that comprise that context or environment are not homogeneous. As noted above, this history of the United States—with wave after wave of both voluntary and involuntary immigration from all over the world—has been an ongoing experiment with diversity, particularly racial diversity. While the ideals generally associated with the founding of this country have focused on "out of many, one," the truth is that social, political, and economic forces perpetuated by the dominant group have generally worked toward separating and segregating people groups rather than bringing them together. While this separation is often associated with the perception of safety and security that comes with familiar appearance, language, traditions, food, and other customs, more often than not the separation is tied to the allocation of financial resources and the benefits that are tied to those resources.

As noted earlier, the history of independent schools is closely aligned with the history of segregation in this country. In efforts to preserve social status or to promote certain values, many independent schools have been founded based on separation by race, religion, and gender. Over years and, in some cases, generations, independent school culture has perpetuated this separation. This culture is supported by language, policies, practices, and traditions, all of which seek to instill in its school community the values associated with the separation. The separation becomes so ingrained that it is not until it is challenged that it becomes apparent to those within the community.

Independent schools are, however, not immune from social and economic forces, nor can they forever escape legal threats that are often tied to these forces. As demographic shifts influenced the applicant pool for both students and employees and as economic factors put financial pressures on these schools, independent schools were essentially forced to confront their foundational principles, including the reasons for excluding one group or another from attendance or employment. The homogeneity that had defined these schools from their beginning came under threat. Some schools embraced this threat, seeing it as an opportunity for growth and change; other schools resisted, fighting to preserve their traditions and legacies and cater to the demands of alumni, many of whom support these schools financially.

According to Jayne and Dipboye (2004), "the definition of diversity has evolved from a focus on legally protected attributes such as race, gender, and age to a much broader definition that includes the entire spectrum of human differences" (p. 410). In this regard, over the past 30 years, independent schools and their associations have expanded and clarified their own concepts of diversity in order to speak to the evolving nature of the term and, perhaps, to reach a broader audience of prospective students and their families, teachers, and administrators. The National

Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), a membership organization comprised of over 1,800 independent schools and regional associations, has sought to navigate the social and economic terrain by crafting policies and creating programming in support of the shifting demographic trends that they have been observing and analyzing. While serving as a national voice for the independent school community, NAIS has had to tread carefully around the independence of each of its member schools. NAIS can advocate for equity and social justice and make membership contingent upon adhering to the spirit of its principles of good practice, but it has limited enforcement ability. In this regard, NAIS first published its Principles of Good Practice for Equity and Justice in 1996. This statement is, perhaps, the most sweeping statement about the value and significance of diversity in the independent school realm. The guidance from their statement is prescriptive (but non-binding), encouraging schools to be intentional in their hiring and admissions practices. It is important for its emphasis on the role of the board of trustees and the head of school:

> The school establishes the foundations for its commitment to equity and justice in its defining documents (mission, core value, and/or philosophy statements).
>
> The school respects, affirms, and protects the dignity and worth of each member of its community.
>
> The board of trustees and the head of school keep the school accountable for living its mission by periodically monitoring and assessing school culture and ongoing efforts in admission, hiring, retention, financial aid, and curriculum development.
>
> The school works deliberately to ensure that the board of trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and student body reflect the diversity that is present in the rapidly changing and increasingly diverse school-age population in our country. (NAIS, 2020)

While aspirational in nature, neither this statement nor any of the best practices promoted by NAIS have the ability in and of themselves to dictate school policy. As a membership organization, NAIS can advocate, teach, train, and provide resources, but they are not in a position to direct school policies or practices, only to withhold membership.

As an accrediting body, the Association of Independent Maryland and DC School (AIMS) is in a different position. By virtue of its ability to withhold accreditation, the standards established by AIMS and other accrediting agencies hold more weight and do have the ability to directly impact school policies and practices. The AIMS statement on diversity builds on the NAIS statement, places it in a historical context, and emphasizes that a focus on diversity is not a singular event or project, but an ongoing process:

> Powerful 21st Century realities now call schools in the Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools (AIMS) to make a greater institutional commitment to diversity. In this context, diversity refers not only to legally protected groups, or to the "big eight" categories, but to the entire range of human variability. Broadly understood, diversity requires an ongoing process by which a school lives and breathes its commitment to include different peoples and perspectives into its community, curriculum, and culture. (AIMS, 2012)

At the school level, diversity statements are generally more aspirational and draw on the school's unique history and culture. Some of the diversity statements specifically reference hiring and admissions efforts; others do not. Georgetown Day School (GDS) was the first integrated independent school in Washington, DC, and the diversity statement on their website reads:

> Today, Georgetown Day School has evolved from its historic beginning as a color-blind institution to one that recognizes, understands, and celebrates the differences that make

> each of us unique while continuing to foster the universal values that we share. Our commitment to diversity remains a bedrock philosophy of GDS, fostering the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of our students' lives. Through day-to-day activities, curriculum, and school-wide celebrations, GDS encourages respect for the variety of beliefs and backgrounds reflected in our diverse community of students, teachers, and parents. (Georgetown Day School website, 2015)

On the same page, GDS indicates what they believe to be the "The Scope of Diversity–The Big 8," which includes age, ability, ethnicity, gender, race, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status/class (GDS website, 2015).

Sidwell Friends School, a very highly regarded school within the Washington, DC community that serves children from preschool through twelfth grade, draws upon its religious founding in its diversity statement:

> Guided by the values and beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends, Sidwell Friends School is committed to creating a diverse co-educational community and actively seeks students, faculty, staff, administrators and trustees from different racial, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds. The School nurtures and values a rich intellectual environment which embraces genuine respect for individual talents, perspectives and opinions. (SFS website, 2015)

The Maret School, another very highly regarded school in Washington, DC that serves children in kindergarten through twelfth grade, utilizes several seemingly interchangeable catch words to describe their diversity goals:

> Maret is a school that values its commitment to creating an inclusive, equitable community of learners—a school that celebrates plural points of view and draws strength

> from its diversity. Our kaleidoscope of cultures, ages, family structures, sexual orientation, races, religions, talents, and perspectives allows us to live our values to their fullest. (Maret school website, 2015)

The diversity statement from Green Acres School, the first racially integrated school in Montgomery County, Maryland, includes language that identifies the reasons for their focus on diversity:

> At Green Acres School, we believe that a vigorous learning environment benefits from collaboration among people of diverse backgrounds and from continual reflection on policies and practices in and out of the classroom. Ultimately, this kind of environment is transformative for everyone. Therefore, Green Acres School fosters an inclusive and uplifting community that welcomes families of diverse ability, age, ethnicity, body image, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.
>
> We strive for diversity in our student and staff populations; to heighten student, staff, and family awareness of diversity issues; to create a strong curriculum reflecting our diversity; and to foster a sense of belonging for everyone in the Green Acres community. (Green Acres website, 2015)

As is evident from these statements, the concept of diversity is being approached and applied from a variety of different—or diverse—perspectives. In all cases, however, the focus of the schools and the school associations is on two key elements: the composition of students, teachers, and administrators at the school and on ensuring an inclusive environment for all members of the school community. These two components—composition and inclusion—go hand-in-hand.

The power of diversity

The business case for diversity has been made over and over again by multi-national corporations seeking to remain competitive in an era of globalization. Similar research by consulting firms, not-for-profit organizations, and research institutions has shown that organizations that invest in diversity and the leadership skills to support it tend to have better results (Castro, 2013). These results manifest themselves in the quality of life of employees, the effectiveness of the organization, and the ability of the organization to compete in an increasingly diverse environment (Castro, 2013). Schools are subject to many of the same forces that impact businesses, and, as such, the case for diversity should not be overlooked.

Konrad (2003) presents the three arguments that have generally been made in support of diversity:

1. Competition for talent requires organizations to recruit talent from an increasingly diverse pool of labor;
2. A global economy requires a diverse labor force to navigate the demands of a global base of customers; and
3. Diverse voices lead to greater creativity and innovation, ultimately leading to better decision-making and competitiveness.

Building on the final point, Cobbs (1994) suggests:

> While other nations may find creative genius in their homogeneity, the creative genius of the American experience has always been our diversity. Whatever our stops and starts and detours, the American impulse has always been to expand rather than contract—to include more diversity rather than less. (p. 25)

Page (2014) builds on this point by indicating that "diversity also speeds adaptation by providing more immediate alternatives as well as more possibilities for recombination into innovating new solutions" (p. 29).

The promise of diversity does not happen automatically. With increased diversity potentially come some associated challenges. Jayne and Dipboye (2004) report that simply having a diverse workforce does not by itself lead to the positive outcomes sought by diversity advocates. Their empirical findings suggest that:

1. Increased diversity does not necessarily improve the talent pool;
2. Increased diversity does not necessarily build commitment, improve motivation, and reduce conflict;
3. Increased group-level diversity does not necessarily lead to higher group performance; and
4. Diversity does not necessarily improve organizational performance. (Jayne & Dipboye, 2004)

These findings suggest that an emphasis on diversity cannot rest solely on increasing the quantity of individuals of diverse backgrounds in an organization. Within a school context, attention must also be given to the ways in which a more diverse student body, parent body, faculty, and administration come together around a common, shared mission and how the concept of diversity is integrated with the school culture. As John Chubb, former President of the National Association of Independent Schools has noted, "We need to ensure that our schools not only seek out a diverse group of students (and teachers) but also truly support all community members" (Chubb, 2014, p. 9). The next question is, what is to be gained from doing so?

Empirical studies have shown the positive impact of greater diversity in schools. The value of diverse classrooms was one of the key findings of the highly influential Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966). Not only were achievement gains reported for African Americans when they were in classrooms with a larger proportion of whites, but positive attitudinal differences toward out-group members were recorded for Whites when they attended integrated classes earlier in their educational careers (Coleman et al., 1966).

Research by Finn and Voelkl (1993) showed that African-American and Hispanic students in schools with a lower percentage of teachers who are people of color showed poor quality teacher-student relationships. The stronger these relationships, they noted, the stronger the likelihood of student success. Advocating for greater diversity among faculty and staff, Foster (1995) showed that cultural solidarity, a more familiar communication style, and increased sensitivity to students of color contributed to academic success. McDonald and Brown (2002) focused on the role as socializing agent that faculty of color played in the lives of White students by "infusing often-neglected, culturally diverse material into school courses and programs, and by teaching students . . . to appreciate and respect cultural differences and to function positively within an increasingly diverse world" (p. 2).

In addition to the cultural sensitivity that emerges from increased exposure to people from diverse backgrounds, the social and emotional development of children benefits from exposure to greater diversity. Jennings (2015) says,

> We want young people to learn to succeed academically, but we also want them to learn to manage relationships in skilled and respectful ways; practice positive, safe, and healthy behaviors; make ethical and responsible contributions to their peer group, family, school,

and community; and demonstrate basic competencies, work habits, and values as a foundation for a meaningful life and engaged citizenship. (p. 36)

Diversity is as much about the environment that is created as it is about the individuals who comprise the environment. Gee (2008), in describing distributed knowledge, says "people are smarter when they work in smart environments; that is, environments that contain, integrate, and network a variety of tools, technologies, and other people, all of which store usable knowledge" (p. 88). As noted above, diversity is not solely about numbers. However, diversity certainly does include numbers. If a critical mass of diverse teachers and administrators are not present to support the social and emotional learning that takes place in the classroom and to model the types of interactions that are likely to contribute to engaged citizenship, the benefits that can be attributed to diversity are not possible (AISNE, 2015; McDonald & Brown, 2002).

Tying this corporate and organizational research together are what I believe to be two important threads. First, trends over the last century have made our planet of approximately 7.8 billion appear much smaller. Advances in technology, transportation, communication, and the interdependencies of global trade create opportunities for engagement with people from diverse backgrounds more often. For some, these opportunities represent new possibilities; for some, these so-called advances bring with them fear and possibly resentment. We see in some countries, including the United States, a rise in isolationism and nationalism. While popular among some groups, these positions are much more difficult to justify and sustain. This leads to the second thread. There is a moral imperative associated with diversity. In times when intense isolationism and nationalism have taken hold, we have seen a commensurate rise in oppression and exploitation of various groups. We have seen this throughout history in a wide range of

countries. Valuing diversity is a moral stand against oppression and exploitation. It values humanity as a whole over the interests of sub-groups.

This leads to the fundamental question being asked in this research, namely: what are the strategies that independent schools, which from time to time have sought to isolate themselves, employ that contribute to greater diversity, particularly racial diversity, among their faculty and staff? Of particular interest are the roles that the board of trustees, heads of school, and diversity coordinators play in implementing these strategies. Before exploring these strategies, it is important to develop a deeper understanding of some of the barriers to greater diversity.

Barriers to greater diversity

Gate keepers

For those seeking employment, the pathway into independent schools, and especially into school leadership, is fairly narrow, governed at each stage by what Lewin (1947) called gate keepers. These gate keepers operate the mechanisms whereby individuals are either allowed to enter the system or are kept out of the system. In addition, it is the gate keepers who establish the flow of people through the system (Lewin, 1947).

Gate keeping can take many forms and has been explored from several different perspectives. Ortiz (2000) and Tallerico (2000) focused on the process of moving into the role of superintendent, identifying the gate keeping role of search consultants and the ways in which gender and race influence the search process. Ortiz (2000) specifically focused on the role that the "pipeline tradition" and "sponsored mobility" played in controlling succession. The "pipeline tradition" is a system that ensures that people move through a system in a regular order that defines the succession process. "Sponsored mobility" describes a mentoring-type relationship that exists between senior administrators and selected junior administrators. The combination of

these two factors, Ortiz (2000) argues, effectively excludes certain groups (in this case, Hispanics) from the pipeline.

DeAngelis and O'Connor (2012) explored the pipeline issue from an economic perspective, focusing on the supply of and demand for educational leaders. They found that while there were a significant number of administrators qualified (based on certification) to rise into positions of school leadership, various factors contributed to the loss of prospective candidates from the pipeline, including lack of encouragement, perceptions of fit by the candidates, and lack of related leadership experience.

The pipeline into educational leadership in independent schools is not well-defined nor extensively researched. Similar to public school leaders, those serving in leadership roles in independent schools possess varying academic degrees, have majored in a variety of subjects, have held various positions, have various backgrounds, and range in ages (NAIS, 2010). A majority of those serving in leadership roles have spent considerable time working in independent schools, generally starting their careers as teachers (NAIS, 2010). Based on the lack of diversity among independent school leaders, it is apparent that gate keepers in independent schools, either at the divisional level or school level, have either served to block the pipeline or have been unable to remove the blockages that have been in place historically. The ways in which they have done this are described below.

Homosociability

Related to and building on gate keeping theory is the concept of homosociability, first described by Kanter (1977). She describes homosociability as the "forces which lead the men who manage to reproduce themselves in kind" (p. vii). Kantor (1977) originally used the term homosociability to describe the way in which managers in a corporation perpetuated a style of

leadership that ensured that the culture, policies, and priorities of the business would be perpetuated. In order to do so, managers hired people into leadership roles who exhibited, both physically and socially, characteristics that were similar to their own. In so doing, managers sought to ensure consistency and adherence to the perceived priorities of corporate leadership.

While the concept was first applied to for-profit corporations, the same idea has made its way into the research on organizations in many segments of society (Hau Siu Chow & Crawford, 2004). Of particular relevance is the way in which homosociability appears in the selection of independent school teachers and leaders and the ways in which gate keepers create barriers to entry that perpetuate a continuity of leadership by the dominant group (Blackmore et al., 2006; Gronn & Lacey, 2006; Grummell et al., 2009). While homosociability impacts diversity across many dimensions of organizational life, of particular interest to this study is its impact on racial diversity.

The literature describes several factors that influence the gate keeper with regard to filling positions in an independent school setting, including the concept of fit (Blackmore et al., 2006; Gronn & Lacey, 2006), issues of trust (Mackay & Etienne, 2006), a deficit perspective (Chen & Yang, 2013), and the avoidance of risk (Mackay & Etienne, 2006). These factors, individually and together, contribute to the development and perpetuation of homosociability within schools.

Blackmore et al. (2006) and Grummell et al. (2009) describe homosociability as a form of "reproductive technology," which, in the interest of both conflict avoidance and certainty, excludes those who do not fit a prescribed pattern or identity. They indicate that the selection of principals under the current system has produced a "normalized principal identity" that is counter to policies related to equity and diversity and that stymies innovation (Blackmore et al., 2006).

Gronn and Lacey (2006) use the phrase "role cloning" to describe the ways in which school systems select aspiring principal candidates that do not differ significantly from those who are departing from the position. Those in leadership positions "effectively 'clone' themselves in their own image, guarding access to power and privilege to those who fit in, to those of their own kind" (Savage & Witz, 1992, p. 16).

It is important to consider homosociability in the context of school culture, perhaps especially independent school culture. Each school develops its own school culture on the basis of several factors, including policies, procedures, and people put in place by the founder(s) of the school; established traditions; geographic location; socio-economic factors; or the school's emphasis on academics, athletics, or the arts (Powell, 1996). School culture is also a reflection of the people present at the school, including both the current faculty and staff, as well as the parent community and the board of trustees. As described above, the practice of homosociability serves as a guardian of this school culture. A natural conflict therefore arises as schools embrace diversity as a core value or strategic priority. Blackmore (2006) notes "There is an inherent tension . . . between valuing diversity (based on racial, linguistic, and ethnic difference) and the desire for social cohesion; between diversity of ideas/values and consensus building" (p. 186). Diversity, in any form, has the potential to threaten an established school culture. Heads of schools are, in essence, forced to navigate the tension between perpetuating school culture and championing a diversity agenda.

Lack of career development opportunities.

Most independent school administrators have, at some point in their career, served as teachers (NAIS, 2010). The importance of this fact should not be overlooked, as recruiting and retaining faculty of color becomes a critical element in the development of individuals along the

pathway to leadership (Ogunbawo, 2012; Thompson, 2008). As noted earlier, only about 20% of those teaching in AISGW schools are people of color (AISGW, 2018). Citing British survey data, Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2013) noted that 70 percent of black and minority ethnic teachers felt it was harder for minorities to move into positions of leadership than their white counterparts.

It is fairly common to see independent school administrators move between schools as they identify opportunities to develop in their careers (NAIS, 2010). In this regard, networking and mentoring are seen as key components of a more comprehensive professional development plan (Johnson & Campbell-Stephens, 2013). As noted earlier, Ortiz (2000) described the concept of "sponsored mobility," a form of mentoring in which more senior leaders sponsor or support those in junior positions through their career development. That being said, black administrators perceive difficulties in accessing the networks and mentors that are so critical to leadership development and report that they need to work harder and accomplish more than their white counterparts (Mackay & Etienne, 2006; Ogunbawo, 2012).

Leadership development opportunities, such as organizing a professional development workshop, serving on an association committee, or serving on a school board of trustees, often serve as a training ground for future leaders (Bush, 2009; Ogunbawo, 2012). Access to these development opportunities can be either encouraged or limited by gate keepers.

The career hopes and aspirations of those seeking positions in independent schools, as teachers or administrators, play a factor on the demand side for leadership positions. The literature provides a glimpse into differences that appear in this area with regard to both gender (Johnston, 1986) and race (Mackay & Etienne, 2006). The research describes the increasing

disillusionment that comes from seeking a leadership opportunity—or simply positive feedback— and not receiving it (Hau Siu Chow & Crawford, 2004).

Lingering discrimination.

Significant scholarly and popular research has been conducted on academic disparities that exist within the educational system. Some of this research has been published in books that have captured broader public interest, including Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (1991) and Paul Tough's *How Children Succeed* (2012). Building both on these disparities and on the history of racism and discrimination in this country, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) proposed a Critical Race Theory (CRT), arguing that "these inequalities are a logical and predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized" (p. 47).

Research utilizing CRT shines light on the significant role that race has played and continues to play in the United States, particularly as related to the systems and institutions that comprise American society. Solorzano, Ceja, and Tate (2000) state that within the context of education, CRT "simultaneously attempts to foreground race and racism in the research as well as challenge the traditional paradigms, methods, texts, and separate discourse on race, gender, and class by showing how these social constructs intersect to impact on communities of color" (p. 63). The interdisciplinary approach of CRT provides both a base of understanding and a methodology for identifying discriminatory systems.

While CRT was crafted, in part, to help explain disparities in the educational system, it did not specifically address the issues associated with the selection or advancement of educational leaders. In fact, I could not find any articles that specifically linked CRT to educational leadership. Agyemang and DeLorme (2010) applied CRT to the selection of head

coaches in college football. Through their research, they found that while nearly 50% of those playing football are black, only a tiny percentage of head coaches are black. Using CRT and Social Dominance Theory, they argue that while black athletes have the skills that allow them to succeed on the field, blacks have not been seen to have the skills needed to coach a team. They liken this to a caste system (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010).

As noted earlier, independent schools were often founded in support of a particular religious or ideological identity. They were permitted to discriminate—for admissions and hiring—on the basis of those characteristics that fit within the school's ideological framework. Over time, this framework became engrained in the school's culture. Brosnan (2001) notes that "This history of discrimination is part of the fuel driving morally guided change in independent schools and is leading them to debate the public purposes of private schools—to consider their own role in supporting a dominant white culture" (p. 471). He continues by saying "The road to equity and justice is a bumpy one for independent schools, many trying awkwardly to change their student bodies without changing their essential nature" (Brosnan, 2001, p. 472).

Lingering discrimination has a direct impact on various aspects of school life, including faculty hiring practices, the retention of faculty of color, a perception of invisibility, burn-out, and the expectation that faculty of color are experts on all issues related to diversity (McDonald & Brown, 2002). The perception that the school—administration, board, and community—is not truly committed to an inclusive workplace has a direct impact on both hiring and retention of faculty of color (McDonald et al., 2002).

The head of school's role in addressing these barriers

As noted in the Overview of the Problem of Practice, the head of school at each independent school is responsible for putting the organizational priorities identified by the board

of trustees into practice. The preponderance of diversity statements that appear on school websites, along with the directives found in the accreditation process for independent schools, point to diversity and inclusion being a strategic priority for many independent schools. To the extent that an independent school is interested in making progress on its diversity initiatives and realizing the vision described in their diversity statements, the head of school has a vital role to play in addressing each of the barriers noted above. The question then becomes what is it that successful schools, through their heads, are doing to achieve greater diversity in their recruitment and retention efforts?

Statement of the Problem

In most Washington, DC-area independent schools, diversity is touted as a core value. Many schools have a board-level diversity committee, a non-board-level committee on diversity, a director of diversity, a diversity statement, and/or have built diversity into their strategic plan. Most independent schools choose to report diversity statistics annually to their local independent school association(s), as well as to the National Association of Independent Schools (if they are members). The Association of Independent Maryland and DC Schools (AIMS), the accrediting agency for many of the schools under consideration, includes diversity among the operational areas that are assessed during the accreditation process. A diversity statement has been crafted by AIMS and is included on their website under "Best Practices." As noted earlier, the degree to which diversity is manifested in a school—in the classroom, in the administration, and among board members—impacts independent schools in several ways, including student achievement, school culture and community, creativity and innovation in the curriculum, role models for teachers and students, leadership development, and succession planning (AIMS, 2012; AISNE, 2001; Chen & Yang, 2013; Hau Siu Chow & Crawford, 2004).

Despite this intense focus on issues of diversity in independent schools, the number of people of color serving as teachers and administrators in independent schools is low in absolute numbers and low relative to the general population (AISGW, 2018). As of the 2017-18 school year, just over one-third of students enrolled in independent schools in the Washington, DC area were students of color. At the same time, only 21.0% of teachers, and 22.0% of school administrators were people of color (AISGW, 2018). By comparison, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the racial composition of the Washington, DC metropolitan area in 2010 was 48.6% White (non-Hispanic or Latino), 25.2% Black, 13.8% Hispanic or Latino, 9.2% Asian, and 3.2% other (Center for Regional Analysis, 2011).

As noted in the research cited above, there are a number of factors contributing to this lack of diversity in independent schools. Some of these factors are historical in nature, stemming from policies and procedures put in place with the founding of specific schools. Other factors reflect conscious choices made by those within the school related to the perpetuation of a school's community or culture. Finally, there are factors that are seemingly unintentional, blind spots in the ways in which policies are made, individuals are hired and developed, and choices are made with regard to school operations, curriculum, and culture. Taken as a whole, these factors serve to counteract the well-intentioned rhetoric of school and association diversity efforts and statements.

While the racial diversity of faculty and staff among AISGW member schools taken as a whole is statistically low, there are independent schools in this population that are making more significant progress to diversify their faculty and staff. The purpose of this research is to seek to develop a deeper understanding of how and why this progress is being made in these schools. Given the pivotal role that the head of school plays in the hiring and professional development

process of their teams, particular attention will be given to the head and his or her attitudes, perceptions, and actions. Pitts (2009), writing about the recruitment of minority students to a private university, highlighted the importance of these attitudes: “If there is a sincere belief among the faculty and staff that the president has an absolute personal commitment to diversity, then there is opportunity to build support for more active recruitment of minority students” (p. 16). The next logical step, then, is to undertake an assessment geared towards exploring the attitudes and perceptions of heads of AISGW member schools and to see if they point toward particular success strategies.

Chapter 2

Needs Assessment

Context of Study

Diversity is a topic that has received significant attention from the independent school community. *Independent School*, the national publication of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), has devoted entire issues to the topic. As noted in Chapter 1, schools have crafted public diversity statements, created board and school committees related to diversity, and hosted diversity-related events, and they are directed to meet certain quantitative measures of diversity as part of the accreditation process. While these efforts have been moderately successful in attracting students of color to independent schools in the DC area, such has not been the case with the hiring and retention of teachers and school administrators of color. As noted earlier, while students of color comprise roughly one-third of the students in independent schools in the DC area, only about 20% of the teachers and school administrators are people of color (AISGW, 2018).

The board of trustees plays a vital role at an independent school. The board is generally tasked with ensuring that the school is operating consistently with its mission and doing so in a manner that ensures the school's long-term sustainability. The board is responsible for hiring only one of the employees at the school: the head of school. The head of school is generally tasked with carrying out the board's priorities. In so doing, the head manages the day-to-day operations of the school, including recruiting, assessing, developing, and promoting school employees—both administrative staff and teaching faculty. The hiring decisions made by the head of school set the tone for the ways in which a school carries out the board's priorities, including how the school embraces issues of diversity and inclusion.

Target audience

Research on diversity and independent schools is critical to several target groups, but for different reasons. As noted in Chapter 1, the board of trustees has a specific role to play with regard to diversity, as referenced in the NAIS and AIMS statements on equity, justice and diversity. Boards of trustees, tasked with legal and fiduciary oversight of the school, seek to ensure that decisions made day-to-day at the operational level contribute to the long-term sustainability of the school. The board's acknowledgement that diversity is a strategic imperative has the potential to impact a school's ability to attract new students—the lifeblood of any school. To the extent that hiring decisions—at the teacher or administrator level—have the potential to impact enrollment, boards will be interested. The board must also keep its eyes on the possibility that failure to address diversity in hiring in a more statistically significant manner could be perceived as discriminatory, prompting legal action.

Heads of school, those with primary responsibility for hiring teachers and administrators, must develop a deeper understanding of the factors that impact an individual's decision to accept an employment offer and to remain at a school once hired. The head of school has a major impact on setting and/or maintaining the culture of the school. To the extent that the head of school is a vocal advocate of diversity and matches these proclamations with action related to hiring and promotion, he or she will have a direct impact on school culture. Prospective families and prospective employees will also look at the head's track record in making enrollment and/or employment decisions.

To the extent that teachers and future school leaders have an interest in pursuing careers within independent schools, they would benefit from a deeper understanding of the barriers to

entry into leadership roles and to career development. To some extent, these barriers can be overcome through dedicated action on the part of the teacher or aspiring leader, including seeking out mentors, joining professional networks and participating in relevant professional development opportunities. To the extent that these opportunities are either denied, underfunded, or not made public, they will have an impact on the success of aspiring leaders in the recruiting process.

In a more systemic way, independent school accrediting agencies must take the lead in ensuring that those schools that are being accredited are upholding the diversity standards that are associated with accreditation. The threat of withholding accreditation is a stick that is rarely wielded, but it is available to the extent that accrediting agencies seek to promote the concept of diversity in a more direct and impactful manner. Through the accreditation process, boards and heads can also be made aware of blind spots that may be impacting their ability to attract and retain families, teachers or administrators of color.

Students are perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of increased diversity at independent schools. Given their reach and influence during impressionable childhood and adolescent years, teachers and administrators, no matter their race, gender, or background, have the potential to serve as role models. In an increasingly diverse society, giving students access to diverse role models is a critical part of the learning experience.

While each of the above noted groups has an interest in diversity as a strategic priority, it is the pivotal role that is played by the head of school that is the focus of this needs assessment. The reason for selecting the head boils down to two key factors. First, the head of school is the conduit through which priorities flow from the board and information flows to the board.

Second, through words and actions, the head of school sets the tone for the faculty and the school community about the school's priorities.

Research questions

Demographic trends point toward increased racial diversity in the general population. Statistically, we have already seen an increase in the number of students of color in independent schools, at present making up nearly one-third of total student enrollment in DC-area schools. We have yet to see similar trends among teaching staff and school leaders in independent schools. The purpose of my needs assessment is to explore the attitudes and perceptions of the heads of independent schools with regard to leadership and diversity and to see whether and how the factors discussed in Chapter 1 appear in DC area independent schools. In so doing, the intention is to explore whether these attitudes and perceptions yield clues as to why some schools may have experienced more success than others in the area of racial diversity. To explore this problem, it is my intention to answer the following research questions as part of a needs assessment:

RQ1. What are the factors contributing to a lack of people of color in leadership roles in Washington, DC area independent schools?

RQ2. How do the head of school's attitudes and perceptions about leadership and diversity impact the overall level of diversity at their school?

As noted earlier, the head of school plays a significant and critical role in carrying out the operational priorities of the school's board of trustees. The head of school is also the banner carrier when it comes to the school's mission and is the public face of the institution with regard to its policies and practices. In this context, it is the head of school who sets the public tone for the school's approach to both leadership and diversity. Understanding the head of school's

mindset on these issues will provide insights into ways in which schools might address the lack of diversity among faculty and school administrators. Therefore, the goal of the needs assessment is to develop a more accurate picture of that mindset by capturing attitudes and perceptions about both leadership and diversity in independent schools.

Method

On the basis of the research questions, an explanatory mixed methods design was chosen for the needs assessment. The purpose behind the framing of RQ1 was to see whether there was alignment between how heads of school thought about their current school culture, practices, and environment and the realities that existed within their school. To do this, a survey was crafted which will be described in more detail below. RQ2 is more qualitative in nature. Drawing upon both the quantitative responses and the open-ended questions in the survey, interviews were undertaken with a representative group of heads who had taken the survey and offered to make themselves available for follow-up. The purpose of the interviews was to help explain the data captured in the survey.

Participants

The context for my Problem of Practice (POP) is AISGW's member schools. AISGW member schools teach approximately 33,000 students and employ several thousand teachers and administrators. Each of these member schools has a head of school or executive director. In several instances, the head of school reports to a President; however, in most instances the head of school reports directly to the board of trustees. For purposes of my needs assessment, my research was conducted with the person designated as the head of school or executive director. In total, there were 79 individuals who met this description. Table 2.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the heads of schools as of the 2013-14 school year.

Table 2.1

Demographic characteristics of heads of schools

Gender	
Male	52%
Female	45%
No response	3%
Race	
White	93.5%
Person of Color	6.5%
Average years as head at current school	8.9 years
Average years as head at any school	12.2 years

Source: Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, *2013/2014 School Statistics*, 2014.

Of the schools that make up the AISGW membership, 26 are in Washington, DC, 33 are in Maryland, and 20 are in Virginia.

Instruments

A web-based survey (see Appendix A) was developed to capture information about current heads of school, including their individual pathways to leadership, their attitudes and perceptions about leadership skills, their attitudes and perceptions about diversity, and the current practices in place at their respective schools related to diversity. The survey developed for this needs assessment used questions that were developed for previous surveys to assess attitudes and perceptions related to both leadership and diversity. The first is the "Questionnaire for Secondary School Principals in England" developed by Coleman (2012) to assess attitudes related to school leadership and differences that may exist based on various demographic characteristics. The second is a survey developed by Dries and Pepermans (2012) to assesses leadership qualities and characteristics. Most of the questions were designed using a 5-point agreement/disagreement Likert scale, although many also provided an opportunity for open-ended responses. Several

questions were Yes-No questions to determine whether specific policies or practices were in place.

In order to elicit greater depth from the heads related to their individual experiences, a series of questions was developed with which to conduct formal interviews with sitting heads of schools (see Appendix B for questions). Soriano (2013) noted "questions asked in a needs assessment should have the same meaning for both the respondents and the investigators if the results are to be valid and reliable" (p. 13). An explanatory design was used in the development of the interview questions to draw upon and expand upon information that was collected in the survey. Both the survey questions and the interview questions were reviewed by a methodologist at Johns Hopkins University and were granted IRB approval for purposes of conducting this needs assessment. Finally, multi-year statistics obtained from AISGW were collected and analyzed.

Procedure

As the intention of this needs assessment was to seek a deeper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of heads of school related to the intersection of leadership and diversity, the survey and interviews focused on three key dimensions: actual experience, attitudes and perceptions, and current practices. Within these dimensions, the following variables were selected:

- Length of service (actual experience)
- Motivational influences with regard to career progression (actual experience and attitudes/perceptions)
- Leadership characteristics (attitudes and perceptions)
- Recruitment factors (attitudes/perceptions and current practices)

- Diversity characteristics (attitudes/perceptions and current practices)
- Diversity practices (attitudes/perceptions and current practices)

Data collection

An e-mail including an introduction to the research (see Appendix C) was written and disseminated through Qualtrics, an on-line survey instrument, to the 79 heads of AISGW member schools. The e-mail contained a link to the Qualtrics web-based survey (see Appendix A) that included 20 questions related to leadership and diversity, plus an additional four demographic questions. In four cases, the survey e-mail was rejected because of an incorrect e-mail address and the email was re-sent manually. Survey recipients were initially given one week to complete the survey. After two days, a reminder e-mail was sent to survey recipients. At the end of one week, 28 of the 79 surveys had been completed. An e-mail was sent to survey recipients advising them that the deadline for completing the survey had been extended by five days. On the fifth day of the extension, a final e-mail was sent to survey recipients notifying them that it was the last day to complete the survey. When the survey closed, 38 recipients had begun the survey; 34 had completed the survey (see Appendix D for complete survey results). The password-protected data is stored by Qualtrics.

When completing the web-based survey, survey recipients were given the opportunity to indicate whether they would be willing to participate in a brief follow-up interview, with 28 of the 34 who completed surveys saying that they would. In order to select interview participants randomly, the list of those willing to participate was sorted alphabetically by the name of the school and every eighth respondent was selected. This yielded four potential interviewees, each of whom was contacted by e-mail. Three interviews were conducted using this method; one potential interviewee did not respond to my request. Of these three interviews, one was with a

White, male head in Virginia; one was with a multi-racial female head in Virginia; and the other was with a White, male head in Maryland. In order to expand the base of respondents and to provide additional qualitative data to address the research questions, two additional participants were intentionally selected by the investigator. As a majority of those currently serving as heads of School are White and male, the candidates were selected based on their gender (male) and their race (White), as well as the geographic location of their school (one in Washington, DC; the other in Maryland). In each case, an e-mail was sent to the selected head of school explaining the reason for the follow-up e-mail and inviting the head to participate in a follow-up interview. The interviews all took place in the head of school's office with only the head of school and myself present. I had no prior relationship with four of the five participants. In the case of the fifth, I had engaged previously in a professional development activity with the participant. Participants were each asked for and gave permission to record the interview. The interviews were recorded on an iPhone and then transferred to a computer and reviewed. The interviews were not fully transcribed. As the interviews were being reviewed, content was transcribed verbatim that spoke directly to the themes of the study and the research questions. An emergent coding scheme was used which involved reviewing each response and pulling information based on key concepts. According to Soriano (2013), the verbatim method "subjectively pulls out respondents' statements that address the purpose and key questions of needs assessments" (p. 111).

Secondary data on diversity was collected from a series of statistical reports, issued annually, by AISGW. AISGW member schools are asked to complete survey questionnaires at the start of each school year. Data are collected on a broad range of topics, including enrollment, financial aid, administrative and teacher salaries, teacher tenure, diversity, development, and finances. Comparing data over time provides an opportunity to analyze the trends associated with

any one of these categories. Table 2.2 indicates, for those positions listed, the percentages that were staffed by people of color from 2011-2014 (excluding head of school). People of color comprise a significant percentage of those serving as Diversity Directors/Practitioners, but the overall number of these positions is small. Among senior leadership positions—Assistant Head of School; Heads of Lower, Middle, or Upper School; and Director of Finance, Admissions, or Development—people of color represent no greater than 24.3% of any of these positions and generally represent no more than 10%.

Table 2.2

Administrative Positions: Total Number of Positions Among AISGW Schools and the Percentage Held by People of Color, 2011-2014 (excluding head of school)

	2011-12		2012-13		2013-14	
Title	n	%	n	%	n	%
Diversity Director/Practitioner	8	75.0%	10	90.0%	13	92.3%
Receptionist/Secretary	53	39.6%	54	44.4%	51	43.1%
Human Resource Director	21	42.9%	20	40.0%	20	40.0%
Assistant Director of Admissions	30	20.0%	31	22.6%	30	26.7%
Head of Lower School	32	21.9%	34	23.5%	37	24.3%
Director of Physical Plant	54	16.7%	54	20.4%	54	22.2%
Director of Summer Programs	32	25.0%	29	27.6%	30	20.0%
Registrar	37	13.5%	36	11.1%	36	19.4%
Head of Middle School	33	18.2%	32	21.9%	32	18.8%
Accounting Manager/Comptroller	53	17.0%	50	20.0%	50	16.0%
Director of Technology	24	8.3%	26	11.5%	25	12.0%
Head's Assistant	66	19.7%	60	18.3%	59	15.3%
Head of Upper School	25	12.0%	25	12.0%	23	8.7%
Director of Admissions	70	11.4%	68	8.8%	67	7.5%
Assistant Head of School	47	8.5%	45	6.7%	42	7.1%
Director of Development	60	0.0%	57	1.8%	58	3.4%

Source: Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, *2011/2012, 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 School Statistics.*

Table 2.3 provides an overview of racial diversity statistics over the seven-year period from 2011 through 2018. As shown, the figures remain relatively constant over this period.

Table 2.3

Annual Diversity Statistics, 2011-2018

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Students of Color	33.2%	33.6%	33.5%	34.7	30.6	33.6	36.0
Teachers of Color	19.2%	18.1%	18.5%	22.1	18.6	19.1	22.0
Administrators of Color	16.7%	15.3%	15.1%	16.4	17.9	18.9	21.0
Trustees of Color	15.9%	16.0%	16.5%	16.6	15.8	17.6	*

* This data was not available at the time the report was produced.

Source: Association of Independent Schools of Greater Washington, *2011/2012, 2012/2013, 2013/2014, 2014/2015, 2015/2016, 2016/2017, 2017/2018 School Statistics.*

Needs Assessment Findings

There were two questions that this needs assessment sought to answer:

RQ1. What are the factors contributing to a lack of people of color in leadership roles in Washington, DC area independent schools?

RQ2. How do the head of school's attitudes and perceptions about leadership and diversity impact the overall level of diversity at their school?

The explanatory design was used for both RQ1 and RQ2. To answer both research questions, the more qualitative follow-up interviews with heads of school were used to explain the quantitative on-line survey data.

Research Question 1

What are the factors contributing to a lack of people of color in leadership roles in Washington, DC area independent schools?

Survey data.

Within the independent school world, the position of head of school is the highest rung of the administrative leadership ladder. Among survey respondents, 31% of respondents had been

serving as a head of school for fewer than six years, 28% had been serving for between seven and 12 years, and 42% had been serving for more than 12 years. According to NAIS, the average tenure for heads of independent schools since the mid 1990's is about 13 years (NAIS, 2010). The lack of movement in this key leadership position is one factor in the lack of opportunity at lower levels for new entrants into administrative roles.

According to a majority of survey respondents, it was through an accumulation of experiences and their own hard work that success was achieved, with educational attainment counting for very little. This perception that hard work contributed to one's ascent into leadership is important, as it has the potential to frame the expectations of those that these leaders are seeking to hire. What constitutes "hard work" is subjective and is, likewise, susceptible to stereotype and homosociability.

When it comes to filling senior administrative positions, heads of independent schools rely on a limited number of sources to advertise positions. The school's website and association websites (e.g., AISGW, AIMS, VAIS, and NAIS) are the primary venues for advertising these positions. These passive resources rely on the initiative of potential candidates to discover and respond. Far less attention is devoted to sources that may attract a more diverse candidate pool, including campus recruiting or advertising in outlets that may be more readily accessed by racially diverse candidates.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended responses to the question about sources of potential candidates. Among the responses provided were: "my personal network," "LinkedIn," "I prefer to grow my own leaders," "letters to colleagues," "phone calls to key players," "word of mouth," "I reach out to those in my network, internally and externally, and share the position I have open and the type of person I'm looking for," and

"networking." Drawing on the factors contributing to a lack of diversity identified in Chapter 1, these responses suggest a very insular, or homosocial, way of thinking about sources for potential candidates. By placing so much attention on their own networks, and the fact that many of the professional networks in the independent school world, from the local to the national level, are primarily comprised of members who exhibit similar racial characteristics, it is not surprising that the pools of diverse candidates that heads say they are seeking are not being found.

Heads of school were asked to provide responses to a series of "Yes-No" questions related to current practices at their schools:

Table 2.4

School Practices

Practice	"Yes" responses
School has a written policy on diversity	77%
School has specific programming in place to promote diversity at their school	71%
School has a non-board level diversity committee	54%
School has a board-level diversity committee	37%
School has specific programming in place to support families of color	37%
School has specific programming place to support faculty of color	29%

While specific programmatic and curricular initiatives may have contributed to greater diversity at the student level, the low level of specific programming to support faculty of color has potentially created a barrier to the hiring and retention of faculty and administrators of color.

Interviews.

Through the follow-up interviews, I sought to develop a deeper understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of those serving as heads of school. The questions were ordered in such a way as to put the interviewee at ease about the topics, focusing first on their personal experience in serving as a head of school and then more intentionally on diversity issues. Those

interviewed spoke passionately about their respective schools, their schools' mission, and the joy they experienced in working with a group of talented teachers and administrators.

In speaking about the value of diversity for their schools, the interviewees spoke passionately about the powerful connection between educational excellence and a more diverse school and classroom environment:

> The reason for a school to see diversity as a good, however they define it, however broadly or narrowly, to spend time, resources, effort, openness on this topic is that it contributes to educational excellence. (Interview 1)
>
> If we are going to be doing our job educationally, kids need to grow up appreciating how important it is to value differences that everybody brings to the table. (Interview 2)
>
> You bring a wealth of perspectives and views that are going to enrich any conversation. (Interview 3)
>
> Children need to learn in an authentically diverse environment; not just black and white; not just heterosexual/homosexual; as many different kinds of structures and backgrounds and belief systems that we can pull together into one learning environment would be really powerful. (Interview 5)
>
> I know how important it is for all aspects of the school community to represent that authentic diversity that we talked about and I know it doesn't at [my school]. It is a really hard thing. (Interview 5)

When it came to their personal perceptions about diversity, specifically diversity on the senior administrative team, those interviewed strongly supported the idea of having a diverse team, but also indicated that finding what they perceived to be qualified, diverse candidates to fill senior positions was a challenge. Those interviewed indicated that some of those challenges

related to what they perceived to be a limited candidate pool; some of the challenges related to perceptions about the qualities and characteristics of those needed to serve in those roles; and some related to the readiness of the school to hire diverse candidates:

> Every good thoughtful school in the country is looking for the same diverse leaders, very competitive market. (Interview 2)
>
> When you promise so much to families, mistakes tend to live with you. How can you find people and promote people from within? (Interview 1)
>
> They [people of color] are going to be under greater scrutiny because of their background. If that person has been grown, developed, made connections, not only does the unfair assumption go away, but they and the school get more credit for keeping and developing great people along the way. (Interview 1)
>
> I didn't want to hire another white man for a position, but he was such a strong fit. I've taken some heat for that. (Interview 4)
>
> I think most independent schools are actively trying to hire people of color but I don't think all independent schools are ready to do that. (Interview 4)

With regard to promoting diversity and hiring for diversity, interviewees appeared to understand that they had an important role to play as the educational and operational leaders of their respective schools. Interviewees spoke of their role as mentors, of creating opportunities for future leaders within their schools to network and connect, and of engaging in difficult conversations. One interviewee was honest about his lack of success in this area:

> I feel like I'm good at hiring, but I have not hired a [racially] diverse candidate. (Interview 5)

When asked about ways in which to expand the base of applicants of color for positions of leadership, the interviewees responded with an affirmation that more work needed to be done in this area. Each interviewee was able to provide ideas, but very few of the ideas had been put into practice. Greater participation in communities of color through recruiting fairs or engagement of professional organizations devoted to serving people of color was seen as a possible entry point for access to more racially diverse candidates. Several discussed the possibility of on-campus recruiting at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, specifically mentioning Howard University in Washington, DC.

Research Question 2

How do the head of school's attitudes and perceptions about leadership and diversity impact the overall level of diversity at their school?

Survey data.

The pathway to becoming a head of school often passes through an assistant headship, but heads were almost equally likely to have come directly from the teaching ranks or from a position as a division head or director of a specific functional area within the school. While the pathway may vary among sitting heads, those surveyed indicated that it was other heads of school who had a major influence on their decision to become a head. As a majority of those who have served or are currently serving as heads are White, this points to a form of leadership reproduction.

When asked about why they chose to work in independent schools, heads focused on three major themes: autonomy, the mission-driven nature of independent schools, and the values-based orientation of independent schools. These factors are significant as they each contribute to the concept of "fit." When heads are looking to fill both teaching roles and senior leadership

positions, there is a broad range of skills being sought. More than one specific skill, it was the breadth of skills that came out in the survey data. Among the specific skills listed in the survey, emotional intelligence, perseverance, and dedication were among those most sought in senior leaders. An individual's relationship skills (e.g., being a team player, communications skills, and collaboration) appeared to weigh heavier in the selection process than the achievement of specific results. Prior work experience and personal recommendations were also noted as significant factors.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to offer open-ended responses to skills or factors considered in the selection of senior staff. Among the responses noted were: "Cultural fit," "excellent soft skills," "people who are positive and balanced," "an 'I can take care of that' attitude," "willingness to be an active participant in school life," "dedication to our mission," "personal warmth," "compatibility with other members of the team," and "people who demonstrate good professional judgment." More than the hard skills associated with functional or technical competence, it was relational skills and a subjective evaluation of "fit" that were most heavily emphasized by these heads of school. As the administrative team often serves as the face of the school to the school community and the general public, this concept of "fit" appears to weigh heavily and appears to be evaluated on the basis of existing school culture.

With regard to current practices, 97% of survey respondents indicated they were the final decision maker when it came to hiring new senior administrators. This result clearly indicates that the head of school is serving as a gate keeper in independent schools.

Heads of school were next asked to assess the degree of diversity for their school community as a whole, for their faculty, and for the senior staff. To the extent that a head of school feels that his or her school is diverse or that diversity goals have been attained, efforts to

further a diversity agenda may be impacted. Similarly, if a head perceives that strategic goals have not been achieved, he or she may devote or direct additional resources to achieving them. As shown in Table 2.5, a majority of heads either strongly agreed or moderately agreed that their school community as a whole was diverse across almost every dimension of diversity, including gender, race, religion, socio-economic status, learning styles, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education, lived experience, and personal appearance. The only areas that a majority of heads did not express strong or moderate agreement were the degree of diversity in education and physical ability in their school community.

The story changes when it comes to diversity among the teaching staff and senior administrators. As shown in Table 2.5, there was significantly less strong or moderate agreement with the degree of diversity among most of the listed dimensions. Of particular note for purposes of this research is the precipitous decline in the perceived degree of ethnic and racial diversity as heads evaluated first the school community as a whole then the teaching staff and then school administrators.

Table 2.5

Strong or moderate agreement with the degree of diversity in their school, their teaching team, and their senior administrators across dimensions of diversity

	School	Teaching team	Senior administrators
Gender	79%	61%	59%
Race	76%	47%	30%
Religion	76%	50%	28%
Socio-economic status	79%	53%	52%
Learning styles	82%	33%	48%
Ethnicity	70%	57%	27%
Sexual orientation	56%	55%	15%
Education	47%	56%	55%
Lived experiences	62%	59%	60%
Physical appearance	53%	50%	30%
Physical abilities	32%	31%	21%

The perceptions specifically regarding racial diversity reveal that 76% of heads either "strongly agree" or "moderately agree" that their school is racially diverse. 47% of heads either "strongly agree" or "moderately agree" that the teaching staff at their school are racially diverse. 30% of heads either "strongly agree" or "moderately agree" that their senior administrative team is racially diverse. As noted earlier, these perceptions of racial diversity stand in stark contrast with the actual overall number of students, faculty, and administrators of color at independent schools. This systemic overestimation of the degree to which a given school is meeting the objectives of its diversity statements or goals has the potential to directly impact ongoing efforts regarding diversity hiring and retention and diversity initiatives within a school.

With regard to diversity initiatives, nearly all heads either "strongly agreed" or "moderately agreed" that diversity was considered in hiring teachers, hiring senior leaders, and selecting board members. While the question did not specifically ask about the consideration of racial diversity, the general agreement with the statements suggests a disconnect with regard to the racial composition of faculty, administrators, and boards of trustees.

85% of heads either "strongly agreed" or "moderately agreed" that diversity is a strategic priority at their school. 91% of heads either "strongly agreed" or "moderately agreed" that it is important to have a diverse senior leadership team. These percentages support the notion that diversity, broadly speaking, is important both to the heads of school and to the schools as a whole. While the question did not specifically ask about racial diversity, the ongoing underrepresentation of people of color among the faculty, administrative teams, and boards of trustees suggests a disconnect between the high priority indicated by the heads' responses and the realities that exist within these schools.

Interviews

The evidence cited above from the survey data supports the idea that while diversity is a high priority, heads of school may have some difficulty operationalizing this priority. Data from interviews affirmed an orientation toward cultural fit and community, hallmarks of homosociability.

When asked about what they enjoy most about working in independent schools, those interviewed invariably spoke about the people with whom they worked.

> The people end of it, the people on my team we are all very different in terms of personalities, backgrounds, and length of tenure and what we are doing. Yet it is a group of people I really like to work with. They are very high caliber of intellectual people. (Interview 3)
>
> The interplay of ideas with my colleagues, volunteers and students that I work with. (Interview 1)
>
> I enjoy the people. This is a very warm, open community. (Interview 3)
>
> I enjoy the collegiality with other people who are working with and in schools. (Interview 4)
>
> It is about the people. (Interview 5)

This intense focus on people, community, and relationships builds on the concept of "fit" mentioned earlier. Heads are in a unique position to both select the people and nurture the community and do so in a very intentional way the brings enjoyment and satisfaction to them personally and professionally.

When asked to consider those attributes that may have contributed to their success, heads described both personal characteristics and experiences. Characteristics that appeared across

interviews included: thoughtful, listener, having a sense of where you want to go, accessibility, approachability, transparency, strong work-ethic, humility, collaboration, and perseverance. Several interviewees mentioned specific work experiences that they felt contributed to a deeper understanding of themselves and equipped them better for success in the future. Several were mentored.

The values that heads sought to promote in their community, and which they sought in their staff, bore a strong resemblance to those values that contributed to their own success: self-regard, self-esteem, risk-taking, hard work, communication, collaboration, reflection, humility, honesty, respect, courage, and integrity.

Discussion

The purpose of this needs assessment was to explore attitudes and perceptions of heads of school at Washington, DC area independent schools regarding the intersection of leadership and diversity. In particular, the needs assessment sought to answer two questions:

RQ1. What are the factors contributing to the lack of people of color in leadership roles in Washington, DC area independent schools?

RQ2. How do the head of school's attitudes and perceptions about leadership and diversity impact the overall level of diversity at their school?

The needs assessment identified a gap between what schools (through their diversity statements) and heads of school say about diversity and how diversity, particularly racial diversity, manifests itself among the faculty and staff at these schools. This is particularly true with regard to the lack of diversity among senior leadership at these schools. School leaders talk about the importance of diversity, yet the faculty and staff of the schools they lead generally lack racial diversity. While there are certainly a variety of factors that contribute to this gap, the survey and interview

responses of heads of school indicate that the attitudes and perceptions of the heads, although unintentional, may be a factor contributing to this gap.

The data described above point to a type of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) whereupon value is placed on the concept of diversity, but the substantive efforts associated with achieving diversity goals are lacking. Those surveyed and interviewed spoke passionately about the value of diversity for their students and school communities. However, when provided with an opportunity to hire candidates who would bring greater diversity to their teams, the default mode for those participating in the survey and interviews was to rely on existing networks and existing sources for their candidates.

The lack of diversity has several implications related to the ability of independent schools to satisfy their respective missions and fulfill the visions indicated by their diversity statements. As children grow and mature through the critical years of their elementary and secondary school lives, the lack of diverse role models in the classroom and in leadership is a void in their educational experience. In the context of a competitive, global, 21st century economy, this void has implications for the future of the students in these schools and for the schools themselves.

While the implications noted above are stark, they should not be surprising. The pathway to leadership on which most of those serving as heads of school have travelled was, in many ways, created to favor them. As noted in Chapter 1, those serving in positions of leadership have participated in and benefited from a homosocial system that is self-perpetuating and serves to preserve the interests of the majority. The attitudes and perceptions of those surveyed and interviewed suggest a gap in conscious awareness about this system, an idea supported by the literature. Taylor (1987) notes that "it is no longer the case that existing senior education managers are seen as safe judges of achievement, because they are not representative of the

groups whom achievement has excluded, and they cannot therefore judge systems which have built in bias favoring people like themselves" (p. 15). Given the gate keeper role that heads of school play in hiring and promoting in independent schools, concerted interventions will be required to address this issue in any meaningful or systemic way.

While the survey data and the interviews identified several factors associated with the lack of racial diversity in Washington, DC area independent schools, there are several schools in this population that have been more successful in their hiring and retention practices. These schools have a greater percentage of faculty of color, have people of color serving as Division heads and other senior leaders within the school, and have hired heads of school who are people of color. According to the self-reports found in the survey data:

- 26 of 34 school heads indicated that their school community was either moderately or strongly diverse;
- 15 of 32 school heads indicated that their teaching faculty was either moderately or strongly diverse;
- 10 of 33 school heads indicated that their senior leadership team was either moderately or strongly diverse; and
- 3 of 33 school heads indicated that 41-60% of their senior leadership teams were racially diverse.

Building on the data presented above, the question shifts from the barriers to greater diversity to the strategies that individual schools have used to achieve greater diversity. What is it about a particular school's culture, and, in particular, its leadership, that has contributed to this success? This question will be explored further in the following chapters.

Chapter 3

State of the literature and development of research questions

The Washington, DC area has a robust private school network, featuring close to 150 parochial and independent schools serving children in grades K-12 (NCES, 2014). Given its position as the nation's capital and center of the federal government, as well as a hub for international organizations, it also has among the more racially diverse populations in the country (Morello, 2012). As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, the robust independent school network, as a whole, has not kept pace with the racial diversity of the community, particularly when it comes to diversity in hiring.

In my needs assessment, which included responses from 34 of the 79 heads at AISGW member schools, 85% of heads of school indicated that diversity was a strategic priority at their school. Furthermore, 91% of heads of school indicated that it was important to have a diverse senior leadership team. In the same survey, only 33% indicated that their senior leadership team was diverse, and, with regard to staff and administrators of color, these figures have consistently lingered around 20% of the school population.

While legislation prohibits overt acts of racial discrimination, data collected in the needs assessment indicated that heads of school make hiring decisions on the basis of "fit" and "culture" and the perception that the candidate will be a "team player." The determination of whether or not a candidate is a good fit for the school's culture and/or is a team player is influenced by a variety of subjective factors and has the potential to result in what Kanter (1993) describes as homosociability—hiring someone like yourself. In so doing, heads justify their decision-making as safe, secure, and providing continuity (Blackmore, Thomson, & Barty, 2006).

In this context, heads of independent schools face what may be perceived as competing objectives: preserving and perpetuating school culture on the one hand and ensuring that the school culture is conducive to increased diversity on the other. Depending on the school and its culture, a potential conflict arises as a natural result of introducing "difference" into the status quo. This conflict is not limited to the introduction or expansion of racial diversity, the focus of this research. Schools and other companies or organizations face this conflict perpetually, as new generations of workers are hired, and as those who have historically been underrepresented or discriminated against join the workforce. More proactive companies and organizations anticipate legislation that protects the rights of workers; others wait and are forced to play catch-up with their systems and organizational culture, putting them at a competitive disadvantage.

While the needs assessment generally confirmed that schools had further to go in achieving their diversity aims, buried within the data is some hope, as indicated in the discussion section of Chapter 2. Various schools are making progress in better aligning their diversity statements with both their diversity hiring and retention and with the aspirations noted in their diversity statements. In this chapter, I will be exploring the research literature related to diversity hiring and retention. Relatively little scholarly research has been conducted in this field within the context of independent schools. What I am seeking to do is draw together best practices—or evidence-based research—on what has been done or is being done to both increase diversity hiring and contribute to the retention of a diverse workforce. In so doing, it is then my intention to compare the work that is being done in successful independent schools in the Washington, DC area and to either affirm these best practices in the context of these schools or add to the literature by offering additional best practices to the literature.

Theoretical framework

As explained in Chapter 1, social constructivism is an appropriate lens through which to explore this issue, as it focuses on the ways in which learning and knowledge are developed as individuals interact with one another. It is through these interactions that school culture is developed and maintained. The evolution and perpetuation of independent school culture is, inherently, a social phenomenon, impacted over time by various factors including leadership, demographics, location, social and economic climate, student and family population, board priorities, and faculty and staff teaching and participating in school life. The school's reputation, a key factor driving independent school admissions, is critical to the school's ongoing operations and it its ability to attract and retain faculty and staff. How this reputation is established, how it is communicated, and how it evolves are also social phenomena that are driven by the interactions of those engaged within and outside the school community. The ways in which an individual school has embraced racial diversity at the cultural level exist within the broader context of the school as a whole and the community in which the school operates.

Given the unique history of independent schools in this country, it is also appropriate to view the question of racial diversity in these schools through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT), which focuses on the influence and omnipresence of race and racism in American society. Agyemang and DeLorme (2010) offer two of the main tenets of CRT:

1. Racism is a normal and, by and large, unconscious aspect of American society and is perpetuated to support and sustain the status and power differentials between Whites and Blacks.

2. Whiteness is a desirable and valuable commodity in American society.

As previously noted, policies and practices were enacted in independent schools that were designed specifically to exclude "others," however the school chose to define "other." It is only

since the 1980s that independent schools, through their main association—NAIS—have prioritized diversity, equity, and justice in a systemic way through the creation of a diversity office, the People of Color Conference, and principles of good practice that seek to address this topic. Brosnan (2001) notes "The road to equity and justice is a bumpy one for independent schools, many trying awkwardly to change their student bodies without changing their essential nature" (p. 472).

Social constructivism and CRT are utilized together to help unpack both the evolution of independent school culture and the influence of race on this culture. As independent schools and independent school leadership continue to be dominated by Whites and as the independent school operates within the broader context of American society, "it is subject to the same racially motivated practices and policies that permeate the everyday existence of Black Americans" (Agyemang & DeLorme, 2010, p. 43). These lenses will be utilized to both identify schools that have developed successful approaches to racially diverse hiring and retention and to explain why these approaches have been successful.

Literature Review

Scholarly research on independent schools pales in comparison to that being done on public schools. The limited research on independent schools notwithstanding, numerous peer-reviewed articles, representing both quantitative and qualitative research, have been published which focus on diversity recruitment and retention, particularly in colleges, universities, and graduate programs. Additionally, regional and national independent school associations, through their own publications and their websites, have published guidance and information on this topic. The literature included in this review identifies various approaches for researching diversity initiatives, as well as identifying those policies and practices that have been successful in

attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. Taken as a whole, they represent a cross-section of best practices by which current and future initiatives can be measured. What the research generally shows is that while significant efforts have been made to increase diversity in various institutions and organizations, such efforts are hard to sustain. Furthermore, there is a "chicken and egg" problem: greater diversity is fostered by having greater diversity. Organizations that have been more successful in fostering a more racially diverse staff have found innovative ways in which to attract and retain these staff.

As previously noted, the bulk of scholarly research on this topic has taken place within the context of public and private universities. While these environments are clearly different from independent schools, many of the social and cultural dynamics are similar. Important lessons can be and have been drawn from these environments and applied in independent schools. The studies identified below create a framework or a template for the best practices that can be found in independent schools. For example, Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, and Richards (2004) explored diversity hiring practices at three large public research universities. In their research, they sought to understand the underrepresentation of faculty of color at these universities by focusing on the departmental search committee process. Their research encompassed nearly 700 faculty searches in which they investigated school and campus records along with affirmative action documents. The results of their study pointed to three specific strategies that seemed to be most successful in recruiting faculty of color into areas other than ethnic studies departments:

1. the content of the job description specifically mentions diversity;
2. the ability for search committees to engage in "special" hiring practices, such as search waivers, targeted hires, and spousal hires; and

3. diversifying the search committee.

These practices are immediately applicable to independent schools which have tremendous leeway when it comes to crafting job descriptions, the hiring process, and who is involved in the search process.

Similarly, Quezada and Louque (2004) and Gasman, Kim, and Nguyen (2011) focused their investigations on the hiring policies and practices of graduate schools of education. In a review of existing research, Quezada and Louque (2004) sought to provide a better understanding of specific barriers to entry confronted by faculty of color in education administration programs as well as to propose strategies for effective recruitment and retention of faculty in these programs. Their main conclusion focused on organizational culture and how the culture itself serves as a barrier to entry and retention: "Many faculty of color leave some institutions of higher education less because of what they bring to the university than because of what happens to them when they arrive" (Quezada & Louque, 2004, p. 219). They recommend that these programs undergo a self-assessment of existing practices to better understand the issues and to identify solutions.

Gasman et al. (2011) sought a deeper understanding of why, despite significant diversification efforts, there was still an underrepresentation of faculty and staff of color. Participants in their case study were chosen based on their involvement in search processes over the previous five years. Semi-structured, 60-90 minute interviews were conducted with 13 participants. The case study approach, rather than yielding specific results, provided a series of observations drawn from both those who participated on search committees and those who were recruited by the school. Among the key observations discussed in their research were:

- the conclusion that senior faculty of color demonstrated a more active interest in hiring additional faculty of color;
- a perspective held by some that diversity is somehow linked to quality and that by increasing diversity you lower the quality of the program;
- the importance of a diverse search committee and more formalized strategies for how a search committee conducts its search;
- the importance of having a diverse workforce in order to recruit a more diverse workforce;
- the importance of advertising in places where people of color were more likely to see the advertisement; and
- a commitment, from the top down, that diversity is a priority.

As with the Smith et al. (2004) and Quezada and Louque (2004) studies described above, these observations are immediately applicable in independent schools, some of which were specifically mentioned in the survey and interview data described in Chapter 2.

With regard to retention at the university level, Gardner, Barrett, and Pearson (2014) explored the experiences of 14 African American administrators at primarily white universities. Their methodology—Consensual Qualitative Research—was used, according to the authors, "because we were interested in understanding the meaning [African-American] student affairs administrators have constructed and how they make sense of the world and the experiences they have had in their world" (p. 237). Drawing on the work of Moore (1983) and Hill et al. (2005), Gardner et al. (2014) selected participants with a minimum of five years of experience who were knowledgeable about the questions being researched. The researchers in this study utilized 45-minute, open-ended interviews which began with overarching questions which were then

followed-up by more probing, unstructured questions. The research identified three key factors associated with career success or career departure: adjustment issues, institutional factors, and career dynamics. McDonald and Brown (2002) noted similar issues affecting independent schools in their research on faculty and staff of color in AIMS schools. Each of these factors are influenced by the barriers to diversity identified in Chapter 1.

Drawing together a series of case studies and empirical data drawn from a survey of 691 teachers at NAIS schools, Kane and Orsini's (2003) research focused exclusively on independent schools. They identify a number of specific actions that schools can undertake to improve the hiring process and enhance the experience of people of color once they are hired to increase the likelihood that they will stay. Among their key recommendations for diversity hiring were: looking at qualities and characteristics beyond the college the candidate attended; making the interviewing process more engaging and welcoming; and drawing more people into the interviewing process, including teachers, parents, and students. To increase retention, the authors recommended ensuring that the school's commitment to diversity starts from the top; setting clear diversity goals for the school and reporting regularly on them; providing a comprehensive orientation program for new staff members; committing to ongoing diversity and inclusion training for all staff; paying staff well; and ensuring that funds are available for ongoing professional development. The explicit nature of these recommendations provides a clear roadmap for independent schools seeking to realize the aspirational goals described in their diversity statements. That such is not always the case represents a clear opportunity that has been seized by some schools and basically ignored by others.

In their analysis of the racial stress of membership within independent school communities, Coleman and Stevenson (2013) note, "The desire for a diverse student body or

faculty is a common refrain heard within the walls of these communities. However, the actual practice of inclusion, equity, and justice is not always authentically advocated" (p. 548). In this regard, it is tempting to suggest that success is purely numerical: simply boost the number of people of color on the team, check the box, and consider it a success. Chapters 1 and 2 focused on the numbers and highlighted the disparity that exists between the aspirations of independent schools and the realities with regard to hiring and retaining people of color. Kane and Orsini (2003) emphasize "increasing the numbers is only the first step in the long road toward making faculty of color receptive to a career in independent education . . . schools need to commit to transforming themselves into truly multicultural communities" (p. 140).

While the focus of my research is on independent schools, this industry is not alone in its desire to address historically low levels of people of color. In 2002, seeking to address criticism about minority hiring practices and to avoid legal claims of discrimination, the National Football League (NFL) implemented what came to be called the "Rooney Rule." The rule mandated that NFL teams include at least one minority candidate among those being interviewed for head coaching vacancies. While the rule has been successful in increasing the number of minority head coaches, there was an important bi-product: "At a bare minimum, the Rooney Rule forces these decision-makers to come face-to-face with candidates whom they previously may have shunned" (Collins, 2007, p. 872). Success in the NFL, as in independent schools, required and continues to require more than opening the door to more candidates. It requires overcoming some structural and systemic barriers, some of which were identified in Chapter 1. As Collins (2007) further notes, "Most of these barriers are based on longstanding, negative perceptions of race—both explicit and unconscious" (p. 873).

In 2001, the Black Student Fund, a Washington, DC-based non-profit that advocates for and supports primarily African-American student access to member independent schools, produced a report outlining a number of recommendations for attracting and retaining African-American teachers and staff. Following a long list of specific policies and practices that schools should consider implementing, the authors of the report summarize their findings:

> Analysis of information gathered indicates that black professionals value the intellectual and academic levels of the schools. They are energized by the motivation and abilities of the students, the well-equipped teaching environments, and the variety of professional growth opportunities.
>
> There is, however, a lack of an equitable environment which creates roadblocks to professional growth, risk taking and the ability to fully participate and enjoy the experience of being a respected member of the school community.
>
> The two salient factors in successful retention are the quality and depth of support provided by the school head and the consistent effort of the administration and trustees to actively pursue the school's mission. (p. 9)

These remarks point to a number of success criteria:

- an equitable environment;
- professional growth opportunities;
- an environment that is conducive to risk taking;
- the ability to fully participate in the school community;
- the ability to enjoy the experience of being a respected member of the school community;
- quality and depth of support from the head of school; and

- consistent efforts from the administration and trustees in support of the school's mission.

The fact that this report was issued nearly two decades ago and that the Black Student Fund has, throughout the intervening years, advocated for the practices identified in the report, and that such little progress has been made at the institutional level, affirms the presence of systemic factors that appear to work against these efforts.

Building on these findings, McDonald and Brown (2002) were commissioned by AIMS to "assist its school heads in addressing recruitment and retention issues relevant to faculty of color" (p. 5). Their unpublished exploratory, qualitative study examined the experiences of minority faculty and staff at AIMS schools in order to pinpoint obstacles to recruitment and retention and to identify strategies to promote greater racial and ethnic diversity. This report highlighted many of the same factors identified in the Black Student Fund report, focusing particularly on the role of the head of school in helping faculty of color in "navigating the troubled waters that these teachers are bound to face" (p. 56) in the context of independent schools. The report drew attention to another important factor, faculty burnout:

> Perhaps more important than anything else regarding minority teacher retention, school heads should take every step to minimize the number of tasks assigned to minority faculty and to be cautious not to exploit them because of their racial/ethnic identity. Whether it be K-12 or college school contexts, minority teacher careers have been destroyed by this form of burn-out. Because the causes for which minority involvement are so important and the consequences of failure in these areas are so great for them in particular, faculty of color feel compelled to lend a hand when called upon. School heads

should help these faculty guard against fatigue and give them license to say no. (pp. 56-57)

In its Principles of Good Practice for Equity and Justice, NAIS identifies several additional factors that can be considered markers of success, including:

- The board of trustees and the head of school articulate strategic goals and objectives that promote diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice in the life of the school.
- The school develops meaningful requirements for cross-cultural competency and providing training and support for all members of its community, including the board of trustees, parents, students, and all school personnel.
- The board of trustees and the head of school keep the school accountable for living its mission by periodically monitoring and assessing school culture and ongoing efforts in admission, hiring, retention, financial aid, and curriculum development.
- The school works deliberately to ensure that the board of trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and student body reflect the diversity that is present in the rapidly changing and increasingly diverse school-age population in our country.
- The head of school ensures that diversity initiatives are coordinated and led by a designated individual who is a member of one of the school leadership teams, with the training, authority, and support needed to influence key areas of policy development, decision-making, budget, and management.
- The school adopts a nondiscrimination statement applicable to the administration of all of its programs and policies, in full compliance with local, state, and federal law. That said, the school should make the law the floor, not the ceiling, for establishing

> itself as a diverse, inclusive, safe, and welcoming community for all students, staff, and families. (NAIS, 2020, p.13)

The focus of these principles is on accountability: setting measurable goals, establishing specific programs, and assigning specific people to specific tasks. While these principles are non-enforceable, they do provide a roadmap for success when it comes to establishing and maintaining a diverse school community. As noted previously, while this document was crafted to have both a practical and moral influence over independent schools across the nation, NAIS does not have the authority to enforce its recommendations.

AISGW has also adopted a statement regarding diversity, equity, and justice. The thrust of its statement is that while each school is unique, all share a commitment to equity and justice. As with the other statements, responsibility for achieving the aspirational goals of these statements is placed on school leadership:

> Creating and sustaining an equitable and just independent school community is based on inclusion, diversity and multiculturalism and requires commitment, reflection, and conscious and deliberate action, as well as constant vigilance. We believe that building and sustaining a diverse and equitable school community cannot succeed without leadership from those responsible for the school's governance. We also believe that each AISGW school community possesses the potential talent and resolve to embrace these principles proactively. (AISGW, 2005, p. 1-2)

As with the NAIS statement, the AISGW statement is non-enforceable. It succeeds in providing a roadmap, but with no accountability for its implementation.

AIMS, the accrediting body for many of the DC-area independent schools, has created a similar document that outlines programs and policies that schools should seek to implement in

order to meet the opportunities and challenges of diversity in the broader community. Strong emphasis is placed on both diversity training for all members of the school community and on bold leadership on the part of the head of school. In addition, through its accreditation process, AIMS specifically captures information on school diversity and asks schools to consider the following questions as part of their self-study:

- Describe significant changes in the composition of the faculty in the last five years.
- Analyze the composition of the faculty in light of the School's philosophy, diversity goals, diversity statement, if it has one, and the needs of its students.
- Describe how the School would like the composition of the faculty to be different and how the School plans to effect these changes. (AIMS, 2017, p. 37)

By asking these questions, and by holding schools accountable for the responses, AIMS is in a position to influence school behavior and to push schools toward deeper deliberation when their policies and/or practices are not yielding progress in this area. That independent schools have not been held to task for failing to meet these standards is a separate issue, but worthy of consideration.

Summary of literature

Taken together, the findings of the research described above, coupled with the practice-oriented statements of various associations, provide a roadmap for independent schools seeking to attract and retain a more diverse workforce. In summary, recruitment efforts should start with an intense focus on the culture at the school itself and examine whether the policies and practices are conducive to greater diversity and whether the community at the school welcomes greater diversity. Recruitment efforts should include a greater number of existing faculty and staff of color without overburdening them. The head of school must be seen as a leader in advocating

for increased diversity if such diversity is to be achieved. With regard to retention, ongoing efforts must be made to ensure a culture of inclusion. Opportunities must be provided for ongoing professional development and networking, perhaps even more so for faculty and staff of color who have historically been underserved in this area. All those in leadership positions at the school, up to an including the board of trustees, must be seen as advocates for both diversity and inclusion. Fancy diversity statements without matching actions fall flat and not only impact the school's ability to attract and retain faculty and staff of color, but also have the potential to damage the school's reputation as well. As noted earlier, the number of faculty and staff of color is only part of the equation; the other part of the equation is how diversity—as a principle and a practice—has made its way into the school culture. What follows is a proposal to see how several schools have been successful in balancing this equation.

Research questions

Given the prescriptive nature of the findings from previous research on this subject and the guidelines established by regional and national associations related to diversity and independent schools, a gap in the research still remains: Why are some independent schools making more progress than others when it comes to diversifying their teaching and administrative teams? This leads to the two research questions that this study will seek to answer:

RQ1: Who serves as the champion for diversity at an exemplar independent school?

RQ2: What practices associated with diversity have had a noticeable impact on an exemplar independent school's ability to attract and retain people of color?

Conclusion

Independent schools are dynamic environments operating in an arena of constantly shifting priorities and demographics. School leaders, including both board members and those directly responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, must take these dynamics into account as they think about their present policies and practices and their future sustainability. Gardner et al. (2014) talk about consensual qualitative research as operating "under the key philosophical assumption that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 237). How individuals construct their reality has a direct impact on issues as broad as school culture and as narrow as specific interview questions. When it comes to diversity in independent schools, a reality has been constructed that has historically served to block individuals of color from gaining access to these schools. The aim of this research is to see how some exemplar independent schools have constructed a different reality, one that is more conducive to diversity hiring and retention.

Chapter 4

Thus far, a problem of practice—the lack of diversity among independent school faculty and staff—was identified in Chapter 1. The desire for greater diversity and some of the roadblocks associated with attaining it were described in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 explored research that has been conducted on this problem and, drawing from this research, identified policies and practices that schools, organizations, institutions, and others might adopt or have adopted that have contributed to greater diversity. The focus of this chapter will be on the design of a study to answer two research questions:

RQ1. Who serves as the champion for diversity at an exemplar independent school?

RQ2. What practices associated with diversity have had a noticeable impact on an exemplar independent school's ability to attract and retain people of color?

Research Design

Drawing on the quantitative data contained in the AISGW surveys and the needs assessment found in Chapter 2, I am seeking to explain the reason(s) for the success that certain exemplar schools are finding when it comes to hiring and retaining a diverse team of faculty and staff. As such, an explanatory sequential design was chosen for this research. Schutt (2012) describes explanatory research as a way to "identify the causes and effects of social phenomena and to predict how one phenomenon will change or vary in response to variation in some other phenomenon" (p. 14). Given the wide variation that can be seen in independent schools when it comes to the extent of racial diversity present among the faculty and staff, an explanatory approach to this research will be helpful in understanding why it is that some schools meet with greater success than others in this arena.

As previously noted, social constructivism and Critical Race Theory are the primary lenses through which this research will be undertaken, seeking to develop a broad understanding of how independent schools understand and engage around the issue of diversity, how individuals engaged at the school make meaning out of the policies and practices in place at the school, and how independent schools have sought to understand and navigate the systemic racism present in society. The primary intent is to allow for the replication of successful strategies by looking at schools that have met with success in this area. By developing a deeper understanding of the meaning that those involved in diversity initiatives at these schools have constructed about diversity and how this meaning has impacted hiring and retention strategies at these schools, my intention is to build on the literature presented in Chapter 3 and to provide something of a roadmap for further initiatives around diversity in independent schools.

A case study approach was utilized to help explain this phenomenon. Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002) explain that the case study approach allows for the researcher to "engage in a broad view of causation that permits getting at the many forces in the world and human minds that together influence behavior in much more complex ways than any experiment will uncover" (p. 500). The case study approach will also provide adequate scope to dig more deeply, and less prescriptively, into the issues under consideration. While an experimental design, including comparison groups and pre-treatment observations, may improve causal inference, the purpose of this research is less to establish causation, per se, than to develop a broad understanding of the variety of issues at play around diversity at independent schools.

Yin (2014) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a 'case'), set within its real-world context—especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 4). In the context of research on

diversity within independent schools, a case study approach, and more precisely, a multiple-case study design, allowed me to explore and analyze both the history and current environment in a way that would not otherwise be possible using an experimental design. By using a multiple-case study approach, I was able to compare and contrast the data, adding a degree of confidence to the discussion.

Yin (2014) goes on to provide additional clarity on case studies, as the concepts of "phenomenon" and "context" are not always clear. The second part of his definition provides the features of a case study:

> [The case study] copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (Yin, 2014)

The nature of the problem of practice and the associated research questions each point to the case study as the appropriate methodological framework for exploring this issue. Prior research on the topic provides the theoretical underpinning that will guide the execution of the studies.

Yin (2014) presents a model for case study research that was adopted for purposes of this research: plan, design, prepare, collect, analyze, and share. Each of these phases will be described in the following sections.

Plan

Chapter 3 provided the background and rationale for adopting a case study approach to address the research question. Using the case study method allowed me to explain the present circumstances through an extensive description of the phenomenon under review. While other

methodologies could be used to answer the "why" question posed, the case study method does not require control of behavioral events, as would be needed if an experimental method had been selected. The primary source of information was derived from interviews through which direct, first-hand information was elicited on what is a contemporary event.

The plan involved conducting two individual case studies at two independent schools in the Washington, DC area. The selection criteria for these schools will be described in the "Prepare" section that follows. Choosing two "exemplar" schools provided a base of data from which data was compared and contrasted. The two separate cases were analyzed through a cross-case synthesis, which will be further described in the "Analyze" section that follows.

Design

Yin (2014) identifies five components of research design using the case study method:

- a case study's question(s)
- propositions, if any
- unit(s) of analysis
- the logic linking the data to the proposition
- criteria for interpreting the findings

As previously noted, this study sought to explain how exemplar independent schools view the role of diversity champion, as well as to explain the practices that exemplar independent schools have implemented that have contributed to the school's ability to attract and retain a racially diverse group of teachers and administrators. Based on existing research on this topic as described in the previous chapters, it is apparent that the head of school plays an essential role when it comes to championing diversity at a school. This proposition—that critical direction and support is provided by the head of school at schools that are more successful in their diversity

initiatives—provided a focal point for this research. It is possible that other factors, such as the board of trustees, a diversity coordinator or committee, an active group of parents or teachers, or some other internal or external factor might contribute to this success and thus provide a rival explanation. A thorough analysis of the data collected will either support the proposition or point in another direction.

Based on the research questions, the school, itself, served as the unit of analysis. Observations and interviews were conducted at the school level, and the analysis took place at the school level. Analytical generalizations were, therefore, geared towards the school level and not toward either divisions within a school or toward regional or national school associations.

It was possible that the observations and interviews conducted as part of this research would reveal the presence of a number of factors that contribute to a school's success when it comes to diversity hiring and retention strategies. The proposition was that it is the head of school who plays the most critical role in this success. In order to ascertain whether that was, in fact, true, it was important to address rival explanations. The "Prepare" section that follows will propose a strategy for ensuring that these rival explanations were adequately explored.

Prepare

Yin's (2014) methodology for preparing for this multiple-case study involves four key components:

- Case study training
- Developing a case study protocol
- Selecting the cases
- Conducting a pilot study

As a single investigator conducted this research, specific case study training with additional researchers was not undertaken in preparation for this research.

This multiple-case study was guided by a case study protocol. The protocol established the procedures and questions that guided each of the two case studies in an effort to increase the validity and reliability of the research. A schematic summary of the case study protocol can be found in Appendix E.

The case study protocol was developed to ensure consistency across cases. As hiring and retention practices, not to mention overall school culture, are part of a dynamic system, it was important to ensure that, to the extent possible, the data collected from each site adhere to a framework through which comparisons and conclusions could be drawn. The research focused on capturing a sample of the wide range of dynamics associated with the system and how individuals in the system are both learning from experience and overcoming the structural elements of racism present in the society in which the system is embedded.

I began the process of selecting cases by engaging in informal conversations with three individuals: the Executive Director of AISGW; one of the co-founders of the Administrators of Color in the DC/MD/VA Area; and the founder of EastEd, an organization that works with schools and school associations on diversity initiatives, including hosting hiring fairs. The purpose of these conversations was to gain insights from individuals who were directly involved with the population of schools under consideration. The aim was not the identification of specific schools to be used in the multiple-case study, but of the factors that might be considered in the selection process. In addition, the conversations were aimed at a better understanding of not just the current environment, but also trends that these individuals had observed over time related to diversity, particularly racial diversity.

These conversations led to a multi-criteria selection process to select cases. The goal of the selection process was to identify "exemplars"—schools whose policies, practices, culture, or other factors have resulted in measurable success when it comes to diversity hiring and retention. Access to school-level diversity data is not readily available. As such, I relied on several proxies for a commitment to diversity, including:

- membership in AISGW
- membership in the Black Student Fund
- membership in the Latino Student Fund
- participation in the 2017 AISGW/EastEd Diversity Fair

Once these criteria were met, the websites of each the schools that satisfied the above criteria were assessed for the following:

- the presence of a commitment to diversity as part of the school's mission statement as evidenced by the inclusion of the words "diversity" and/or "inclusion";
- the presence of a diversity statement (apart from the school's mission);
- the presence of a diversity coordinator and/or diversity committee; and
- to the extent that photographs of faculty and/or staff were present, visual evidence of racial diversity among those pictured.

Finally, having met the criteria noted above, I wanted to develop a sense of whether and how observations or statements were potentially influenced by the school's geography. As such, schools that met the above criteria were divided into the three regions that make up the membership of AISGW: the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. Schools were then selected at random from each region until such time as one school from two different regions agreed to participate in this study.

At this point, the head of school at each of the selected schools was contacted by e-mail to ascertain whether the school would be open to participating in the proposed research. When a head of school declined an invitation, another school from the same region was selected. The negative responses from those schools who chose not to participate focused primarily on either a general reluctance to participate in any research studies or the fact that schools were under tremendous pressure from having to operate in the midst of a myriad of national and global challenges. The lack of research literature on independent schools, in general, bears out the first point. As for the second point, at the time this study was being undertaken, independent schools were addressing three major issues: a global pandemic, significant national racial tensions, and significant political tensions. As Washington, DC area schools, these factors were conflated due to the outsized role that the federal government plays in each of these arenas. In all, ten schools were approached about participating, of which positive responses were received from two. Appendix F contains the letter to the school describing the research, the protocol to be followed, and a solicitation to participate.

Upon receiving confirmation from two schools about their willingness to participate, formal approval was then granted by the Johns Hopkins Institutional Review Board.

In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest and the possibility that the data contained in this research could be used by one or more schools in a manner not intended by the research, the names of the schools, as well as the names of those participating in the research, were disguised. The phrases “School A” and “School B” were used to differentiate between the two schools.

Data collection

Yin (2014) describes the six key sources for case study evidence: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Due to access restrictions brought about by a global pandemic, access to archival records, documents, physical artifacts, and direct observations were not possible. As a result, the findings in this research focus solely on interviews and information contained in the school's public-facing website. Further research utilizing these additional sources of evidence could add additional texture to the findings.

Yin (2014) further describes the use of multiple sources for developing "converging lines of inquiry." As findings from each of the various sources were analyzed, the goal was to see whether they converged around the proposition or around a potential rival explanation. Comparing and contrasting the data also helped support the construct validity of the multiple-case study.

In reviewing the school's website, evidence was sought to affirm the school's commitment to diversity, including specific references to the school's diversity statement, photographs and/or video content that represented the diversity present at the school, and events or activities that specifically spoke to the school's diversity initiatives. While much of these materials has been carefully curated by those responsible for portraying the school to both internal and external audiences, the ways in which they do this can be captured and described. Ultimately, curated or not, the proof came in the ways in which the school was able to attract and retain racially diverse faculty and staff.

The main component of the data collection process was interviews with school representatives. As an explanatory, qualitative study, the goal of this research was to help explain

why some schools were making more progress toward the diversity success factors identified in Chapter 3. Six individuals at each school were identified for interviews based on their position and their responsibilities:

- President/Chair of the board of trustees: In collaboration with the board as a whole, the President/Chair of the board is generally tasked with goal setting and overseeing the work of the head. Board Presidents/Chairs will often either oversee a strategic planning process or ensure that those responsible for carrying it out are on task. To the extent that the board has identified diversity as a strategic priority, the President/Chair will be broadly knowledgeable about how the priority was set and how it is being implemented.
- Head of school: This person is generally tasked with implementing the strategic and operational mandates of the board of trustees and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school. To the extent that diversity has been identified as a strategic priority, the head will ultimately be responsible for ensuring that the goals associated with these priorities are both identified and implemented. As previously noted, the head is generally the final decision-maker in hiring decisions and how funds are prioritized, especially around professional development.
- Diversity Director/Coordinator: This person is generally tasked with overseeing the diversity activities at the school and tracking progress against specific diversity objectives as stated in the school's diversity statement.
- Representative of the diversity committee: Obtaining the perspective of a member of the school's diversity committee provided a school-wide perspective on this subject that is not otherwise associated with a specific position at the school.

- Teacher of Color: This is a member of the faculty who is in a position to describe his or her experiences at the school. Ideally, this person will have been at the school for longer than three years in order to be able to comment on the ways in which initiatives have originated and been implemented at the school, as well as be able to provide commentary on the impact of these initiatives.
- Administrator of Color: This is a member of the administrative team who is in a position to describe his or her experiences at the school. Ideally, this person will have been at the school for longer than three years in order to be able to comment on the ways in which initiatives have originated and been implemented at the school, as well as be able to provide commentary on the impact of these initiatives.

While the nature of the community at a school is impacted by more than these six individuals, when it comes to setting and implementing the strategic tone for the school around issues of diversity, these individuals—particularly the board president, the head of school, and the diversity coordinator—play vital roles and are in a position to explain the current status and plans for the future. Because the racial composition of these three positions could not be ascertained beforehand, intentionality was given to selecting both a teacher and administrator of color as a way to ensure racial diversity among those being interviewed. As noted by Harper and Hurtado (2007), "Researchers have consistently found that racial/ethnic minority students and their White peers who attend the same institution often view the campus racial climate in different ways" (p. 12). By incorporating racial diversity across interview participants, I was able to compare and contrast the perspectives expressed by those interviewed with one another and across institutions.

Procedurally, once the head of school agreed to participate, the head of school was asked to provide contact information for the board president. A separate invitation was sent by e-mail to the board president, acknowledging the agreement by the head of school to participate in the study. At each participating school, the board president agreed to participate in the study. A separate e-mail was also sent to the diversity coordinator at each school, also acknowledging the agreement by the head of school. Contact information for these individuals was obtained from the school's website. The diversity coordinator at each school agreed to participate in the study. Based on the criteria identified earlier for the faculty of color, the staff of color, and the member of the diversity committee/council, the head of school provided a list of initials for each of the individuals at the school who fell into each of these categories. From this list of alphabetized initials, I utilized Google's random number generator to select a number based on the number of people who fell into each category. Based on the number generated, I went back to the list and selected the initials of the person from the list that corresponded to the number. In other words, if the random number generator returned a 5, I selected the fifth person on the list. Having selected the individual's initials, I then went back to the head of school with the selected initials. The head of school then provided contact information for these individuals. Invitations to participate were then sent to each of these individuals by e-mail, again acknowledging the agreement of the head of school to participate in the study. To the extent that an individual was selected, invited, and then declined to participate, the process was repeated until such time as an individual from each category agreed to participate. The text of the e-mail to prospective participants other than the head of school can be found in Appendix G. The demographics of those who agreed to participate can be found in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	White	African-American	Asian-American	Latinx	Total
Male	3	2		1	6
Female	3	2	1		6
Total	6	4	1	1	

At School A, participants in this study had served at their school for an average of 5.8 years; participants at School B had served at their school for an average of 8.0 years.

Once an individual agreed to participate, a follow-up e-mail was sent with an Informed Consent Form and a request to provide a meeting date. Once a mutually agreed upon date was identified, I scheduled a Zoom meeting and sent a Zoom invitation to the participant. Signed Informed Consent Forms were collected from each participant prior to each of the interviews. In two instances, participants requested a pre-interview phone conversation to discuss the general purposes of the research. In both instances, participants agreed to participate in the study following the conversation.

In order to maintain anonymity, participants in the study were assigned numbers from one (1) to six (6). In order to be able to conduct the cross-case synthesis, the titles of those interviewed were retained to the extent that it did not compromise the person's identity. In most cases, however, references to selected interviews will appear with the school indicator first, followed by the interview number.

The data collection questions are a critical third component of the case study protocol. The questions, applied consistently across the cases, allowed for cross-case synthesis and kept the research from veering off in directions that did not specifically address the research

questions. Questions were crafted for each of the key categories of evidence to help focus the research. Each person being interviewed was asked essentially the same questions:

- How long have you served in this position?
- As the [Title], what do you see as your primary role?
- What attracted you to this school?
- What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?
- What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?
- Why is diversity important to this school?
- Who or what is the champion for diversity at the school?
- Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?
- What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?
- Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?

The responses to the pre-selected questions led to additional questions that provided additional clarity to the initial response and allowed the conversation to go in a different direction from that initially envisioned.

The invitation to participate in the study included an opportunity for respondents to receive the study questions in advance of the interview. The heads of school at both School A and School B received the questions in advance of the interview and, in fact, reviewed the questions in advance of accepting the invitation to participate in the study. The board president at School B, as well as the staff member at School B, also received the questions in advance of the

interview. In all other instances, the participant responses collected during the interview were extemporaneous.

As previously noted, all of the interviews took place via Zoom, an Internet-based videoconferencing platform to which students at Johns Hopkins University are provided access. The Zoom platform provides the functionality for both audio and video recording. The Informed Consent Form specifically asked participants to indicate their willingness to be audio and video recorded. Once the interview was completed, both audio and video files of the interview were saved on my computer on an encrypted disk image.

While Zoom has proven to be an effective means for being able to engage in research during a global pandemic, there are specific limitations imposed by Zoom, the most important being the physical separation between the interviewer and the interviewee. This physical separation does not allow the interviewer to observe the non-verbal cues that are often present during interviews and which may signal specific attitudes or reactions. Additionally, the Zoom-based interviews did not allow me to observe the physical environment or context in which the interviewee resides, which can also provide signals relevant to the research. In the context of this study, it was not felt that these limitations materially affected the contents of the interviews or the findings.

The Zoom-based interviews all took place without any technical difficulties. Audio and video recordings of the interviews took place successfully. The audio and video files generated by Zoom were renamed by the researcher based on the coding scheme noted above.

In order to transcribe the interviews, the researcher subscribed to a service called Trint (www.trint.com). The service provides artificial intelligence-based transcription services, as well as an editing platform to both review and annotate the interviews. Once the interviews were

transcribed, the researcher reviewed the transcription, making edits to the raw transcription file and highlighting passages from the interviews that were relevant to the research questions. Following transcription, editing, and coding, the document was exported into a Word document and stored on the same password-protected computer.

Analysis

As noted previously, the selection of two schools allowed me to conduct a cross-case synthesis of the data collected in an effort to link the data to the proposition. Each individual document created during the interview phase was read and re-read to develop a broad understanding of the content before the process of coding began. A priori codes were assigned to meaningful segments within each interview, focusing on key topics or themes drawn from the interview questions. Once these key topic codes were assigned to segments of each interview, the codes were collected and grouped based on similarities. Once that process was completed, I then went back into each transcript to bring together all of the segments that fell within each theme. As I re-read these segments, an additional set of codes emerged based on existing practices, challenges to these practices, and emerging practices. The codes that emerged started with four main categories or themes, and then broke into several sub-themes:

- an articulation of why diversity is important to the school
    - the relationship between diversity and community
    - how diversity shows up at the school
- an understanding of the role of a diversity "champion"
    - how people think about a champion (qualities/characteristics)
    - roles and responsibilities of a champion
    - the relationship between the champion and the school's mission

- a description of best practices in recruitment
    - existing practices
    - challenges to existing practices
    - emerging practices
- a description of best practices in retention
    - existing practices
    - challenges to existing practices
    - emerging practices

As I was focused primarily on identifying practices that led to increased diversity recruitment and retention, this coding scheme emerged as the best way in which to understand the policies and practices in place at the school, as well as the ways in which they are being implemented and barriers to their implementation. These codes also served to explain more fully the role that the head of school played as part of the school's diversity practices. Following the coding of the interviews, content from each interview was compared and contrasted across the two schools in the study.

The final component of the case study protocol for most case studies is a guide for the case study report. As these case studies are being conducted as part of the requirements for completion of a doctoral degree, a separate guide was not completed.

Share

The primary audience for my dissertation is the community of scholar practitioners, particularly those involved—directly or indirectly—in diversity initiatives in independent schools.

The next chapter will comprise the discussion or "share" section of this multiple-case study. Each individual case—the collection of data from an individual independent school—will be analyzed using a technique called "explanation building." Yin (2014) describes "explanation building" as a form of pattern matching that seeks to draw conclusions based on causal links between elements. In this research, the analysis will focus on the potential causal links between the ways in which the board sets its priorities, the ways in which these priorities are communicated to the head, the ways in which the head communicates these priorities to his or her faculty, staff and broader community, and the ways in which priorities have translated into specific actions and results. The schools themselves were selected based on a level of relative success in this area. By identifying key players, key elements of language, and specific processes that together have allowed the school to achieve greater diversity, it is my hope to be able to contribute to the body of research on this topic.

Ultimately, the goal of this research was to answer two research questions:

RQ1: Who serves as the champion for diversity at an exemplar independent school?

RQ2: What practices associated with diversity have had a noticeable impact on an exemplar independent school's ability to attract and retain people of color?

Having previously identified a proposition—that those schools that have a head of school who is championing diversity initiatives are making more progress on achieving their diversity goals—the explanation building will focus on whether the data collected in the multiple-case study explains this proposition or supports a rival explanation.

Chapter 5

The problem of practice identified in Chapter 1 of this study was the lack of racial diversity among independent school faculty and staff in the Washington, DC area. Through a needs assessment (Chapter 2) that focused on the attitudes and perceptions of heads of independent schools, an initial hypothesis emerged that centered on the prominent role that the head of school in these schools played as a gate keeper in the hiring process as well as in setting and perpetuating the culture of the school. While the needs assessment affirmed the significant role of the head of school as it relates to diversity initiatives, particularly around hiring, a further review of the research (Chapter 3) identified several practices that, when taken together with the data obtained through the needs assessment, pointed to a more complex set of factors that contributed to success in the area of diversity recruitment and retention. As several independent schools in the Washington, DC area are making progress, quantitatively, in hiring and retaining faculty and staff of color, two research questions emerged:

RQ1: Who serves as the champion for diversity at an exemplar independent school?

RQ2: What practices associated with diversity have had a noticeable impact on an exemplar independent school's ability to attract and retain people of color?

The previous chapter described the methodology associated with selecting the two schools that served as the focus of this multiple-case study and the processes associated with the implementation of the study. This goal of this chapter is to present the findings for each of the two research questions. As noted in Chapter 4, this was a multiple-case study. The focus is, therefore, on comparing and contrasting responses from the schools in response to the research questions, as well as drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Findings

In order to understand why schools were implementing certain diversity-related practices, it was important for me to develop an understanding of the context in which each school was operating. In order to do this, I sought an articulation by each of those interviewed as to why they felt that diversity was important to the school. The answer to this question was stated in a variety of ways, reflecting the role, demographics, and experience of those responding. Some of the responses focused on more on value of diversity for the students:

> When you feel you belong and you feel respected and you feel loved, you're going to learn more. (Interview A1)
>
> In general, diversity is important because I always say we need to color our worlds. And children need to have their worlds colorful and when your world is colorful, then it's not shocking when you see someone that doesn't look or think like you. (Interview A5)
>
> Our students need to see people like them in positions of power. (Interview A6)
>
> I think it's important for every child to see windows and mirrors. Right. People that look like them reflected in the mirrors and people with whom they can get a window into another perspective. And I think that makes children better people. But I also think it makes them more effective as leaders, as community members, as contributors to this world. (Interview B1)
>
> We are solidly, I would call it an upper middle class school community, for the most part, and if we did not value diversity in our school, and we didn't intentionally try to create a diverse environment, it might be very homogenous, in which case our children would get out of school with no idea how to deal with a much more diverse world where they have

to work with people from other backgrounds and be able to form relationships with other backgrounds and other races and other religions. (Interview B2)

There's so many studies and we know the research says that we can literally save children's lives by having them see someone who looks like them in the school environment. (Interview B3)

It's really important that the kids whose parents have power and who are likely to inherit power in our society are good, moral, well-educated people so that they can lead the next generation and bring about the changes that we want to see. (Interview B6)

Other responses focused more on the importance of diversity as it relates to the learning community as a whole:

The reasons why we do this work. It's protecting dignity, fostering authenticity, fostering those genuine connections, building skills, and growing wisdom. (Interview A3)

How do we see every angle of a topic if we don't have all of those angles within the community? And it's really important in this day and age that we really do it and not just say that we do it. (Interview B4)

And everyone who's a piece of this community makes this community better and enriches this community. And so diversity of thought, diversity of experience, race and ethnicity, religion, socioeconomics, all those things enrich our experience. (Interview B5)

If you're not a diverse community and you're not striving to be a diverse community that values others, you're going to be left behind, you're out of touch, you're outdated, you are closed off from the realities of our world and also missing out on a lot of really awesome stuff that other people can bring to the table. (Interview B6)

As evidenced from the range of responses above, the value of diversity to these schools ranges from being a strategic imperative to being a moral imperative. Responses from School A, in general, tended to focus more on why diversity was important from an external perspective, while responses from School B tended to focus on the value of diversity to the school community itself. There was intense focus by both schools on the value for faculty, staff, and students of role models: people of diverse backgrounds serving in positions of leadership and authority. Words or phrases such as "sense of self," "dignity," "identity," and "self-worth" were used to describe how important a diverse community is to each of the members of the community.

Diversity champions

The literature review and needs assessment pointed to the critical role played by the head of school when it came to both hiring decisions and setting the tone for diversity initiatives at independent schools. Therefore, another interesting point of comparison in this multiple-case study is the way respondents at schools A and B viewed the "champion for diversity" at their respective schools. The question did not limit respondents to one answer, so in several instances, a respondent may have pointed to more than one person or group. Nine of the 12 respondents, including four from School A and five from School B emphasized the significant role being played by their school's Diversity Coordinator. By comparison, only five of the 12 respondents (two from School A and three from School B) mentioned the head of school. Several other individuals or groups were mentioned as champions, including the board chair, the board as a whole, and the assistant head of school. A surprising response came from one respondent from School A and all six respondents from School B: the central role that the school's mission played in providing guidance and direction to the school community around diversity efforts.

Another important finding expressed explicitly by four respondents (two from School A and two from School B), and mentioned implicitly by others, was that the role of champion did not fall to just one person.

> I do think that sort of having a more dispersed approach is perhaps healthier. (Interview A1)
>
> If you don't have everybody on board, it's too much for one person to carry. (Interview A5)
>
> So we all have to be a champion for it. If we're waiting on one person to be that light and to be that change that's too much to ask of anyone. (Interview B4)
>
> I don't think it's just one person. I would say that we have a lot of really passionate individuals here on faculty and staff. Diversity doesn't work with just one person. (Interview B6)

To the extent that the role of champion can be embodied in a person (as opposed to a mission statement), interviewees were asked to describe the qualities and/or characteristics that made someone a champion for diversity. As the schools selected for this research have been identified as exemplars, the purpose for the question was to ascertain whether those people championing diversity at the school's possessed any unique characteristics that contributed to the school's success in this area. The responses were incredibly varied: nearly 50 different qualities or characteristics were mentioned, including some that spoke to personal qualities and others that spoke to the role and responsibilities of the individual serving as a champion. Among the personal qualities mentioned were:

- Being a good listener (B1, B2, B5, B6)
- Valuing the perspectives of others (A2, A3, B1, B3, B6)

- A motivation for and a willingness to act (A3, A4, B1)
- A commitment to personal and professional learning and growth (A2, A2, B2, B5)
- An enthusiastic teacher/trainer (A3)
- An ability to communicate a vision/purpose (A3, B2)
- A strong commitment to the work (A3, B5, B6)
- A person capable of establishing a safe space (A3)
- A willingness to take risks (A3)
- Authenticity (A6, B2, B3)
- Humility (B2)
- A strong ability to collaborate (B2)
- An ability to set the pace and make adjustments when necessary (B2)
- A dogged, contagious optimism (A1)
- An ability to see the big picture (A2, B3)
- An ability to anticipate and be proactive (A2)
- Someone who is trusted and has the ability to establish trust (B3)
- Fearlessness, boldness, fortitude (A6, B3)
- A willingness to persist, even in the face of obstacles (A4, A5, B3)
- An ability to practice self-care (B3)
- A capacity for curiosity (B6)
- Someone who can be a calming voice (B3)

The Diversity Coordinator at School B stated how important it was to be present in leadership meetings, at Board meetings, and in departmental meetings where issues related to equity frequently arose.

The answer to the question of who serves as the champion for diversity at exemplar schools, based on the findings noted above, is not easy to pinpoint. While heads of school clearly play a pivotal role, exemplar schools have found a way in which to share the role and its associated responsibilities with others in the school community. This will be described further as a best practice in the section that follows.

Best practices

Having established why diversity is important and how diversity is championed at two exemplar schools, attention can now be given to the practices that these schools have implemented that demonstrate their commitment to diversity and that have allowed these schools to both attract and retain a more diverse faculty and staff. Based on the interviews conducted with representatives from two exemplar schools, the following best practices emerge:

- distribute the champions
- embrace the mission
- embed the practices
- engage the board
- review the policies
- expand the search
- recognize the “value add”
- pay for the work
- create the safe space
- scan the horizon
- establish the expectation
- acknowledge the pain

Several of these practices, including the important role of the board, recognizing and compensating extra work, and ensuring that the school's mission speaks to the importance of diversity, build on the findings and recommendations of Kane and Orsini (2003) and McDonald and Brown (2002) which were described in Chapter 3. The identification of other practices represents an extension of this earlier work. Each of these findings will now be discussed in turn.

Distribute the champions

My hypothesis, informed by the needs assessment described in Chapter 2 and the literature review in Chapter 3, was that the head of school at independent schools served as a gatekeeper: allowing people in or keeping people out. To the extent that a school was successful or lacked success in recruiting or retaining a racially diverse faculty and staff, my contention was that the head of school was the critical factor in these efforts. This study revealed something slightly different. Those interviewed acknowledged the critical role played by the head of school, but did not stop there. Ownership for success in this arena was seen as resting in the hands not just of one person or the board or a committee, but in the hands of many members of the community.

> And [our head of school], I would say, really is the champion for this initiative at our school. But then there are many people who run with it to make it happen, you know, because [the head] can't do it [alone]. And there's so many others that are passionate about it. (Interview B2)

As noted earlier, there is too much work, the work is complex, and the work takes its toll. All of these contribute to the need to democratize the role of champion. In order to facilitate wider ownership, members of the community need to be both well-informed and well-equipped. To be successful, members of the community need to develop:

> . . . the ability to listen effectively, to understand somebody else's viewpoint, the ability to communicate in a way so that you can be received effectively, the ability to communicate across cultures, the ability to take on other people's perspectives, the capacity for empathy, the ability to stay in very difficult conversations and navigate them such that you come to positive resolutions. (Interview A3)

In this regard, messaging and modeling from those in leadership roles, including the board, was seen as important. Additionally, key responsibilities needed to be executed, and it was noted how important it was not to have these responsibilities fall to just one person. Exemplar schools have someone designated as the diversity coordinator (or a similar title), and this person has a specific role and specific responsibilities. That being said, those interviewed, particularly at School B, acknowledged the facilitative role that the person with this title fulfilled. The work belonged to everyone, not just the person with the title. It was also acknowledged that ownership for the work shows up in different ways: "Some people are more comfortable championing it out loud and some people are more comfortable behind the scenes" (Interview A5). Exemplar schools recognize that advocates for diversity are as diverse as the topic itself. As noted in Interview B5, "So I think now, again, like getting that important skill set from multiple different people and everyone bringing to the table what they do well, I think has really helped us move forward."

This practice of distributed championship neither affirms nor negates the gate keeping role that heads of schools play in the hiring process at independent schools. As noted in Chapter 2, nearly 100% of heads are involved in the hiring process. What these interviews indicated was that schools that have been successful in their recruiting and retention efforts have acknowledged the limitations and potential biases that a single person—the head of school—might have and have found ways in which to mitigate against these limitations and biases.

Embrace the mission

The exemplar schools identified in this study were able to point, unequivocally, to their mission as the guiding statement for their work related to diversity. A clear, concise statement about what they do and why they do it informs not only the day-to-day interactions between all members of the school community, but also informs the strategic priorities for the school. A clear mission is seen as so critical to this work that all those interviewed from one of the exemplar schools (B) pointed to the mission as the champion for diversity at their school:

> Everyone can speak the mission and not just quote it, but knows it and believes it. (Interview B1)
>
> The mission is what really resonates. (Interview B2)
>
> You have to have a guiding principle and once you have that guiding principle, then it's really easy to carry out the principle. (Interview B4)

It should be acknowledged that words in a mission statement may be necessary, but not sufficient. To the extent that the words do not match the actions of those in the community or in leadership, the words will be seen as lofty ambitions, at best, or as hypocritical, at worst.

It should also be noted that many schools considered for this study have statements on their websites related to diversity which are separate from the school's mission statement. These diversity statements inform the school's diversity practices which, in some cases, operate in parallel to the school's mission and, in other cases, appear as an add-on. In the case of School B in this study, the intentionality given to the inclusive language of the mission statement serves as a beacon to those employed by the school and those who are part of the school community.

Embed the practices

Those interviewed at exemplar schools spoke about the ways in which diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging had been woven into the life of the school and curriculum. They did not say this to downplay the significance of the subject or to suggest that it didn't deserve special attention. What arose from the interviews was that diversity had become a consideration for everything that took place at the school: from regular discussions at the board, to curriculum design, to compensation and benefits, to extra-curricular access and participation, to student and faculty recruitment and retention, to policies and procedures. The diversity coordinator at School B commented on how the role had expanded over the years such that this person was now participating in every dimension of school life.

> My job is to make sure that regardless of who you are and what you need, you find your place and your space and your support . . . that you feel valued and valuable and that you are affirmed in whatever identity you have. That there is someone there to help you through struggles and to share your successes. And that for me takes me through lots of different almost all areas of the school life, from curriculum to the board to policies to hiring to vendors right into our learning center where so many of our kids get amazing support that helps them succeed right in the way they need to. (Interview B3)

When diversity practices are successfully embedded into the day-to-day life at the school, they become a lens through which life on campus can be observed. Two respondents at School B used the phrase "windows and mirrors" to describe this lens and the ways in which diversity practices can be evaluated:

> I think it's important for every child to see windows and mirrors. Right. People that look like them reflected the mirrors and people with whom they can get a window into another

> perspective. And I think that makes children better people. But I also think it makes them more effective as leaders, as community members, as contributors to this world. (Interview B1)
>
> Windows to other worlds, mirrors that reflect themselves back and sliding glass doors where they can step into another possible possibility. (Interview B6)

Utilizing these metaphors has served as a lens through which this exemplar school can think about how it creates and implements policies, programs, and practices. How does this practice impact me? How does this practice impact someone else? How does this practice open up a new possibility for equity, inclusiveness, or belonging?

Engage the board

As noted in Chapter 1, the board of trustees at an independent school holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the sustainability of the school. Day-to-day operations for the school are entrusted to the board's one employee: the head of school. The head of school operationalizes the board's priorities through the hiring of personnel and overseeing the activities of the school, reporting back to the board on a regular basis. While the head of school or any of the employees of the school or any of the students at the school or any of the families sending their children to the school may feel strongly about the value of diversity, it is the board which signals its priority. As described by those interviewed, the boards at exemplar schools have identified diversity both as a strategic priority and as a matter of health and safety.

> At a board level we can set a climate and a strategic direction that's conducive to having a healthy school, having a healthy relationship with the head of school, setting priorities and a direction that's then attractive to the faculty. (Interview A2)

> My primary role as chair and the primary role of the board, as I see it, is to ensure that the school is in position to effectively pursue its mission and to ensure its long term sustainability and health, you know, a lot of which circles around financial health, but also, you know, health of the faculty; health of the community. And the most important job we have is hiring the head of school and making sure we've got the right leader actually making things happen and that we're doing everything possible to help her or him . . . succeed and whether challenging periods, whether that's giving advice, being a sounding board, helping to share the heat when there's controversy in the community in a period like today, but really making sure that he or she's got everything he or she needs to be able to be successful. (Interview B2)
>
> I think [the board chair] is deeply immersed . . . in the importance of this, and . . . has communicated that to our entire community. I think that's really significant. (Interview B5)

At both of these exemplar schools, the boards have a diversity committee that focuses on the ways in which diversity supports the long-term sustainability of the school. These boards include matters of diversity as a routine item on their agenda. These boards prioritize diversity as a health and safety matter, giving it the same attention that the pandemic or other critical health issues might receive. These boards prioritize diversity initiatives in the budgets that they approve, ensuring that resources are available to support the diverse array of initiatives that make the school an exemplar school, including funding for professional development, networking, affinity groups, and stipends for additional work.

Review the policies

Those interviewed spoke about the ways in which they were unwilling to let the past dictate the future. From the board to administrators to classroom teachers, everything from board practices, to the staff handbook, to the classroom curriculum was subject to review at exemplar schools. This finding follows from the recommendations of Quezada and Louque (2004) in their review of faculty hiring and retention practices at graduate schools of education.

Three of those interviewed from School B stated that independent schools were not ostensibly established with diversity in mind:

> And so how do we make sure that our students feel like they belong in our community? And while our community was not originally built for them, how do we make sure that we are combating anything that continues to make students feel like this community is not built for them? (Interview B1)
>
> Most independent schools were not built for the demographic that they have now. (Interview B3)
>
> It pushes back on the very fabric of why these schools were created. And that's a big push. I mean, . . . we fight it every day when people start discussing, you know, the Constitution. You supported a document that wasn't written with everybody in mind. And no matter what, we can keep going back to that. Well, you know, we've done a lot. We've done a lot. We have to rewrite that document and are schools willing to go all the way back and say, hey, for the last hundred years, we were wrong. This school was created for this reason and we're not going to continue the legacy. We're going to approach things this way. Either you're in or you're out. (Interview B4)

These statements, innocuous at one level but damning at another, speak to the entrenched mindset that can keep independent schools stuck in practices that no longer speak to present realities. Changing demographics and changing priorities require a top to bottom assessment of policies and practices. Exemplar schools are willing to put in the time and effort to review these policies and make the adjustments necessary to both attract and retain faculty and staff of color, along with diverse students and their families. While the diversity coordinator may give this practice particular attention, exemplar schools have equipped and empowered members of their community to both speak and act when policies or practices are no longer serving the institution well.

Recognize the "value add"

As described in Chapter 1, homosocial behavior leads to the hiring of people who exhibit similar characteristics to those in the position to hire. The word used in many organizations to describe this behavior is "fit." Many organizations persist in their desire to find candidates who "fit" within the framework of the existing organizational culture or, as independent schools often say, their "community." Not so with exemplar schools. Exemplar schools seek to identify candidates who will add value to their existing culture and community. This "value add" does not check a box or fill a category. This added value comes from the candidates' lived experiences, their perspective, their worldview, and the ways in which their diversity will serve as a "window, a mirror, or a sliding door" to those in the community, including to other faculty and staff members, as well as, and perhaps even more so, to students. Interviewee B4 spoke about the ways in which schools have found ways in which to add value to their community through the hiring of teachers of color to teach "non-core" subjects (e.g., music or performing arts). This

interviewee suggested that additional added value will come when more faculty of color are hired to teach core subjects, like English, math, and science.

In probing with respondents what they meant when they spoke of the school's community, several words were used most often:

- Trust (A1, B1)
- Respect (A3, B1, B2)
- Sense of belonging (A3, B2)
- Welcoming (A3)
- Caring (B3), kindness (A3), love (A1), and warmth (A1, A3)
- How people greet one another (A3) and whether or not they greet one another (A3)
- Whether your voice is valued or not (A3)
- Liking the people you are around (A3)
- Collaboration (A1)

In seeking candidates who add value to the schools' community, it is tempting to think about whether the candidate will fit into these established community norms. Exemplar schools value their community, but they are also willing to push the community to be better. As noted in Interview A6, "the community benefits from multiple perspectives." There is also intentionality on the part of exemplar schools not just to see the value add as part of the recruitment process, but to ensure that those in the community are valued:

> We're going to hope that everyone feels loved and valued and supported. But my job is to make sure that whatever it means for you to be successful, that we're helping you do that. (Interview B3)

> [Community is] a space where people who work together to bring out the best in one another and support one another in the areas that are important to them. (Interview B6)

Expand the search

Exemplar schools are literally going the extra mile to identify candidates of color who they believe will add value to their existing school culture and community. Exemplar schools are attending local independent school diversity hiring fairs and they are traveling around the country to attend similar fairs. These schools are reaching out to places that have not been approached traditionally, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (two of which exist in Washington, DC and another three of which exist within 50 miles of DC), to establish relationships with students, faculty members, and administrators who might sow seeds of future interest. They are nurturing relationships with graduate schools of education for similar purposes. These schools are identifying organizations and job boards that are frequented by candidates of color. These schools are empowering those within their school community to nurture relationships with those outside of their community through professional development and networking opportunities. These extra efforts require both an allocation of time and resources, and these exemplar schools have seen the fruits of their labors. Of course, identifying good candidates goes hand-in-hand with the point just mentioned: prioritizing the value that these candidates will add to the school over the traditional approach of seeking to determine whether the candidate is a good fit for the school culture.

In speaking to the Association of Independent School in New England (AISNE) on March 3, 2021, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, director of the Center for Antiracist Research at Boston University and author of *How to be an Anti-Racist*, encouraged independent schools to go the extra mile by thinking about the recruitment of diverse faculty and staff in the same way that

college football coaches seek talented players. He indicated that coaches can't use location as an excuse. Coaches need to make their school and their program as attractive as possible. To the extent that a school has certain deficiencies, Dr. Kendi encouraged school leaders to think creatively about ways in which to position their programs to be different or better than other schools. He noted the schools have often pointed to shortcomings in the pipeline for talent. To this point, he noted that sometimes schools need to create a pipeline if one doesn't exist. The exemplar schools in this study have embraced these principles and taken steps toward implementing them.

Expanding the search also means capitalizing on those aspects of the school that attracted existing faculty and staff of color to the school. Among those interviewed, the qualities that stood out included the warmth of the community, kindness, the intentionality of the school's mission, the quality of the people at the school, a focus on the students, small class sizes, a positive atmosphere, and space to be creative. Exemplar schools have learned how to play to their strengths while expanding their search.

One of those interviewed also spoke about expanding the search by flipping the traditional script of "is this candidate good for my school" to "is my school good enough for this candidate." This re-orientation, while subtle, speaks to the internal work that schools must do to be the schools in which diverse candidate may want to work. As those interviewed described those elements of the school that attracted them, most spoke about the people with whom they interacted during the interview process. A new dynamic is created when those being interviewed sense that this is a school that is engaged in diversity work and understands what it takes to be an inclusive environment where faculty and staff feel like they belong.

Pay for the work

As noted in the section on "Expand the search," exemplar schools are going the extra mile not just to search for candidates, but they are also going the extra mile to create a school culture and community that is equitable and inclusive. This doesn't happen by decree; it happens when people take responsibility for engaging in equitable and inclusive practices, sometimes going above and beyond what is otherwise written in a job description. To the extent that individuals are specifically asked to engage in these activities, exemplar schools have allocated the financial resources to either support programs or compensate individuals for their time and effort. Examples of such work include attendance at diversity fairs, engagement with recruiting efforts, participation or leadership of diversity-related committees or affinity groups, serving on discussion panels, mentoring other teachers or students, leading book discussion, attending conferences, and participating in networking opportunities. Not all activities require additional compensation, but exemplar schools acknowledge the additional work, stress, and burden that these activities may create and are willing to address the challenges, at least in part, through additional compensation. The diversity coordinator at School B put it this way: "I think it comes down to funding, right. I think I was at a workshop. I think it was at POCC recently, and someone said, you know, your budget is a moral statement. And I said, that's true."

It should be noted that the further down the path a school goes toward creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community, the more diversity-related activities and programs that once seemed "extra" or "additional" are now integrated into school life. That being said, for the foreseeable future, allocating funding specifically in support of diversity work is a priority at exemplar schools.

Create the safe space

One of the challenges—and opportunities—of diversity work is that it can bring up topics that are difficult to discuss. These topics may relate to this historic or current experiences of individuals or groups of people. They may also relate to challenges with personal relationships, be they within families, within communities, or at the workplace. Other difficult topics may relate to such wide-ranging topics as health disparities, housing opportunities, access to resources, and shortcomings in the educational system. While these topics can often be discussed at the abstract or systemic level, for many people these topics are deeply personal. Exemplar schools recognize that individuals within their community may benefit from a "safe space" in which to discuss these and other topics of a more sensitive nature. They also recognize that individuals may benefit more from these safe spaces when such groups are comprised of individuals with similar characteristics. The intention of these groups at exemplar schools is not exclusivity, but the opportunity to build relationships, to learn from one other, to share experiences, and to identify opportunities for the larger community to grow. More often than not, these groups, often referred to as affinity groups, are typically not agenda-based, although specific topics may be prepared in advance for discussion. At exemplar schools, these groups are not ends in themselves, but a means toward deeper self-understanding and ways in which to grow in community. By providing this support structure, exemplar schools are creating a framework for empowerment and agency, as well as equipping members of the community for deeper engagement.

Creating and maintaining these safe spaces is important, but they also require leadership, which is why distributed championship is so important. The diversity coordinator at exemplar

schools can put the framework in place for these spaces, but it is the individuals in these spaces who make them safe:

> It's easy to let someone in, but it's not always easy to make sure someone feels like they belong. (Interview A1)
>
> If you don't have something to grab onto, it can feel completely overwhelming. (Interview A3)
>
> And there's also like meetings for staff and faculty of color. And we have those every month and we just all come together and just talk. And it's kind of like a big old therapy session. And I think having people there that recognize you and support you and understand the hardships you're going through if you're going through any hardships helps keep people because if there was not anyone there that I could relate to, then I'd be like, oh, I don't know if I can stay here. No one looks like me. No one relates to me. No one's having the same issues that I'm having. So I think that does a lot with retention. (Interview A4)
>
> So we get to come together and just share that stuff with each other and unload and just know that we're not alone. (Interview A5)
>
> My job is to make sure that regardless of who you are and what you need, you find your place in your space and your support. (Interview B3)
>
> It has made a big difference because you get to see the work happening and not just hear it happening, but you're sitting in a room where the work is happening because we're all trying to work through this together. And I think when we all start to share, the wall starts to come down and we kind of start to see where this playing field really is. (Interview B4)

Funding for, support for, and a commitment to these spaces benefits from the commitment of the board at exemplar schools. As noted earlier, the boards at exemplar schools are demonstrating their commitment to diversity by viewing it as a health and safety issue for their community:

> The first question we always ask is what do we do about health and safety? Is this a safety issue for our children? Is this an issue about the health of our children? And if it's a health and safety issue for our children or faculty, that always ranks highest. And when we went through this, we said, you know, we really need to view these issues about inclusiveness and racism as health and safety issues and they have to have the same level of priority and importance, so let's . . . identify the things that we need to attack most and that we can really move the ball with. Let's be visible about those and let's demonstrate the priority. (Interview B2)

Scan the horizon

Independent schools must serve the students attending the school, as well as the families that are paying tuition for their children to attend the school. In addition, independent schools must do what they can in order to serve their faculty and staff in order to both support excellence in teaching and administration, but also to retain them. This service creates a sense of community within independent schools, a quality that attracts families, as well as faculty and staff. Exemplar schools go one step further: they look to serve not just those within their school community, but they scan the horizon in order to observe and seek to understand the needs of those outside of their immediate community. There is an awareness that schools can become islands of homogeneity. Efforts toward greater diversity within the school community are important, but equally important to these exemplar schools is engaging with the diverse Washington, DC

community within which these schools exist. Those interviewed suggest that there is always more than can be done in this regard and noted, specifically, that the extraordinary efforts that go into fundraising efforts, particularly capital campaigns, could serve to benefit not just the school but also the larger community.

> We've done a lot of work on racial diversity. We've done a fair amount of work on understanding gender and sexuality diversity. We've done a lot of work to understand social science, implicit bias. We've built out frameworks like our anti-bias framework. We've understood other frameworks like understanding cultural competency, the four components, and we've brought speakers and all that stuff. But so much of the lived experience of folks in our community in intersecting ways are centered around the social and economic realities of the people in our community, and we haven't touched it . . . We talk about inclusion and equity in this and that and the other. But our very existence is a an inherently exclusive existence. We've got to be able to grapple with that reality . . . It just feeds this desire that I don't honestly think will be reachable that as an independent school community, we could see ourselves as part of the identity of being part of the ridiculous privilege that we are to be doing extraordinary work for outside communities that are not sharing in that prosperity and that privilege. (Interview A3)

In referencing the work of Bryan Stevenson and the Equal Justice Initiative, Interviewee A5 spoke about the importance of proximity as it relates to independent schools and the communities in which they are located: “I love hearing him talk about the importance and the impact of being proximate to people whose lives are totally different than yours.” He continued, “how do we understand how to serve others who don't have the things that we have.”

This level of awareness of the broader community is not just a hallmark of exemplar schools, but it is seen as a strategic imperative: the changing demographics of the Washington, DC metropolitan area suggest that future students, as well as faculty and staff, will be more diverse. Being perceived as an authentic community partner is an important relationship building element, long before a student or employee joins the formal school community.

Establish the expectation

As noted earlier, exemplar schools are being intentional in their efforts to examine existing policies and practices that may have created barriers to diversity in the past or present. These efforts, which often involve difficult conversations with multiple constituencies, take time. They also require careful listening to various perspectives, including those who do not necessarily see the value of increased diversity at the school.

> We definitely have members of our parent body who will say things like, I send my child to your school to learn to read, to learn to do math. And all this stuff about anti-racism is beside the point. Sure. I don't want my kid to be racist, but this is not what school is for. That's my job. (Interview A1)

> There is a fear of doing things for fear of the response from the community who, when they're paying [thousands of] dollars to send their kids to school, feel that they have a certain say and right to ask for and demand, etc. (Interview A3)

Pushing too hard, too fast has the potential to alienate rather than to create allies.

> Folks who've been really uncomfortable in this work or maybe even resistant in the work have left because it's been uncomfortable for them to be here. I just have sort of accepted that that's part of the journey. And part of the process is just to be uncomfortable. (Interview A1)

> So I think that even if people are involved, we still have people that are on the fence or that, you know, would rather things remain the same. (Interview A5)

Exemplar schools are willing to invest the time and resources to have the honest conversations necessary to generate buy-in to the school's diversity efforts. These schools, while being open to the conversations, are also uncompromising in the direction in which the school is moving.

A particular challenge comes in how diversity initiatives are presented: are they going to be optional or required?

> It's a fine balance between encouraging people to do things and requiring it. I think once you make it mandatory, you start to get resentment. (Interview A6)
>
> And it's the first time where we're actually having all faculty and staff engage in conversations explicitly about race and about privilege and equity and inclusion. And before it used to be just kind of an optional thing where if that was your area of interest, you could come to an evening program and talk with other faculty members and now everyone participates . . . That was one of the things that those of us who had been engaging in diversity work before this would complain about that we weren't being intentional and we weren't setting aside time very specifically to talk about these issues . . . No, we're going to carve out the time. We're going to make the time because it's that important and it's that urgent. (Interview B6)

Exemplar schools recognize that not everyone is going to agree with the direction that the school is taking with regard to diversity, but are also aware that a mass exodus from the school would not be good for the community as a whole. These schools have charted out a direction, are moving intentionally in that direction, and are mindful about those in the community who may need to be encouraged to follow.

Acknowledge the pain

A recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education drew attention to the current state of mental health among minority members of the teaching community:

> Faculty members of color are already in a delicate position. Usually they are one of a few minority scholars, or the only one, in the room. When faculty members feel singled out for their racial identity, the loneliness, added stress, and even impostor syndrome can take a toll on their mental health. Sometimes those feelings and other factors, like an inability to create meaningful change or frustration over being the "token" minority in the department, can prompt them to leave their institution. (Zamudio-Suaréz, January 26, 2021)

The challenges in higher education are also felt at the primary and secondary independent school level.

There are those within the independent school community, particularly faculty and staff of color, who feel like they cannot be fully authentic at the independent schools in which they work:

> At our last meeting, we invited faculty of color to the meeting to kind of share their experiences working at our school. And I remember just being really affected by them saying, like, I feel like I have to leave who part of who I am in the car when I walk through the school door. (Interview B6)

Faculty and staff of color often feel that they have to put on an independent school persona that has the potential to compromise their integrity and their ability to teach or lead authentically. Even at a time when schools are engaging in regular and ongoing diversity work, these individuals experience macro- and micro-aggressions on a regular and ongoing basis.

> We as a school can do a whole bunch of stuff, but our students still go home and then they still hear things in their homes and then they carry that with them and then they that's brought back to school and that impacts students of color, sometimes teachers of color. (Interview B5)

They operate with a sense of fear that their contributions will not be valued and that their position is constantly being evaluated:

> Then that also adds to the mental, the cognitive things that we all already carry. Just being a person of color in a predominantly white space, you know, having to battle the thoughts of like I have to work even harder to make to, you know, to make sure my parents respect my abilities … the pressure of, like, I have to overperform just to get, you know, their respect. (Interview A5)

Faculty and staff of color also have to confront a lingering sense of belonging:

> For example, when one of my colleagues, she's Latina and, you know, or one of my colleagues who is a black man, you know, parents sometimes assume that he's security when he's the dean of students. Parents think that my colleague who is Latina, they assume that she was one of the maintenance staff. (Interview A5)

The additional responsibilities that faculty and staff of color are often asked to carry in support of diversity initiatives add to this burden. In the long-term, these pressures and compromises create stress, anxiety, and a sense that they are under a microscope, perpetually.

> We still live in a society where there's bias, there's prejudice, there's stereotypes, there's assumptions. And we know what those are. And so we're always worried about . . . I was telling my head of school that folks of color live in constant fear. Right? Not just of the police and things like that, but that we're not valued and that we're replaceable. Right.

> And so that we don't have the same options or the privilege to be mediocre. (Interview B3)
>
> I think any time you are a person of color and you go into a new space, you're not given the benefit of the doubt. You almost have to prove that you deserve to be at this table. You're watched not in a negative way, but it's like, are they crossing all their Ts, are they dotting all their I's? So there are more eyes on you. (Interview B4)

Exemplar schools recognize and acknowledge this pain and take intentional steps to mitigate against it. Said Interviewee A3, “the most effective thing you can do in an institution is take care of the people that are there.” These schools establish patterns of open communication from the beginning of a person’s employment so that there are no surprises with regard to work expectations. These schools are intentional about their asks related to additional work and who makes these asks. These schools create support networks, including affinity groups, so that people can talk about what they are experiencing and seek, collectively, ways in which to address issues. Along these same lines, the heads of exemplar schools have an open door which allows those experiencing both joys and frustrations to share these feelings with leadership. These schools have regular feedback loops so that faculty and staff have a clear understanding of expectations and ways in which to grow and improve. Exemplar schools create professional development, career growth, and networking opportunities which mitigate feeling stuck in one’s role.

> People can leave if they want to leave, but we want to make sure that they're, you know, while they're here, they're feeling really professionally satisfied. (Interview A1)

Exemplar schools recognize that the pain one person may be feeling may be totally different from that pain that another person is feeling.

> Not every person of color has the same needs . . . everyone comes to the table with different experiences and understandings. (Interview A6)

In this regard, it was interesting to hear from one person of color that was interviewed about the role the school could or should play to mitigate against the pain being experienced and the role of the individual:

> I think one of the biggest challenges we have as people of color here at our institution is balancing two things. One is the expectations that we might have of our community to help our experience be more like we want it to be. Right. I think the other side of that is our ability as people of color to make our experience what we want it to be . . . I go back and forth between two things, one is to change the world that people experience. And the other is to change the way people experience the world . . . I do believe it starts with ourselves. And I think as people of color, we have a responsibility to liberate and heal ourselves and do that through our relationships with ourselves, with our relationship with others, with our relationship with God. (Interview B5)

As noted earlier, part of being a champion for diversity and part of being a member of a community is knowing when to listen and knowing when to act. Exemplar schools are equipping people with the skills necessary to do both and, in so doing, are creating safer spaces where all of those present feel honored for the individuals that they are.

Other specific recommendations

In addition to the findings noted above, those interviewed shared a number of specific practices that their schools have implemented that have led to increased recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color. In the context of this multiple-case study, it should be noted that most of these practices are in place at School B while fewer are in place at School A.

Other recruitment practices

- Include the diversity coordinator in the interviewing of all candidates (A6)
- Broaden the group of individuals that are involved in the initial screen of resumes (B1)
- Provide anti-bias training to all of those involved in the recruitment process (B1, B3))
- Retain resumes from previous searches so that they can be used in future searches (B1)
- Ensure that candidates of color meet faculty and staff of color (B1)
- Set specific goals and measure them (B2)
- Seek to fill openings internally with candidates who may have skills that are being underutilized or could be expanded (B2, B6)
- Hire for positions that aren't open yet (B5)
- Engage regularly in the local community to build relationships with potential future candidates or those who may be able to refer them (B5)
- Develop an ambassador program through alumni and/or parents who can reach out to diverse candidates (B6)

Other retention practices

- Expand the onboarding process from a one-off meeting to a more intentional, year-long process of creating engagement opportunities for new hires (B1)
- Develop a mentoring program to facilitate ongoing relationship-building, professional development, and networking opportunities (B1, B2)
- Write thank you notes when people step in to serve (A3, B1)
- Encourage and fund professional development opportunities (A4, B4)

- Ensure that the soliciting of leadership opportunities is equitable (A3)
- Bring in alumni and other guest speakers to speak with faculty, staff, students and the broader community about lived experience around diversity (A1, B4)
- Engage in community-wide reads to begin to develop a shared base of knowledge (B4)
- Create regular opportunities for fun community engagement (e.g., family dinners, game nights, and concerts) and ensure that these opportunities are scheduled in such a way as to be equitable (B5)

While the context of each of these schools needs to be taken into consideration, the above listed practices have enabled the school to attract and retain a more racially diverse group of faculty and staff.

Discussion

In this multiple-case study, six members of each of two different school communities participated in a qualitative study on practices related to diversity recruitment and retention at their respective schools. The schools selected for this study had demonstrated, through words and actions, a commitment to diversity that, for purposes of this study, was deemed to be exemplary. Those interviewed spoke extensively and passionately about the intentional and specific actions that their schools had undertaken, as well as work they still needed to do.

While limited by size and scope, the findings in this study, properly contextualized, offer schools a roadmap for future success in the areas of recruitment and retention of a more racially diverse group of faculty and staff that builds on many of the practices identified in Chapter 3. Schools that have committed not just to the idea that diversity is important, but that have taken active steps toward making their communities more diverse have immersed themselves in the

subject and are actively studying the research. Based on the findings in this chapter, exemplar schools have demonstrated that the practices described in the literature do not operate in isolation from one another; they operate in an integrated, intersectional way that centers diversity at the school.

In a provocatively titled article, "Why Doesn't Diversity Training Work," Dobbin and Kalev (2018) speak precisely to the importance of taking a more integrated approach to diversity efforts:

> The key to improving the effects of training is to make it part of a wider program of change. That is what studies of workplace training in other domains, such as health and safety, have proven. In isolation, diversity training does not appear to be effective, and in many corporations, colleges and universities, training was for many years the only diversity program in place. But large corporations and big universities are developing multipronged diversity initiatives that tackle not only implicit biases, but structural discrimination. The trick is to couple diversity training with the right complementary measures. (p. 52)

The exemplar schools identified in this study are in different places with regard to their integration of best practices. School A was able to articulate the practices, but at the moment appeared to be implementing the practices the way many schools have done to this point, in an isolated, silo-based manner. School B, on the other hand, was able to describe how the work in one area builds and supports the work in other areas.

When viewed through the lens of social constructivism, it is not surprising that these exemplar schools would be in different stages of implementation. The individuals at the schools in this study are in the process co-creating knowledge, are learning from one another, and are

engaged in a process of discovery about what works and what doesn't work in their community. They are doing this in the context of a society that was structured, as noted by several of those interviewed, to support white privilege. The best practices identified in this study are, in a way, a rejection of white privilege and represent a pathway forward for greater diversity and a greater appreciation for what diversity means for independent schools.

For the schools that took part in this study, increasing the racial diversity of their faculty and staff is only one part of a multi-pronged approach to building and sustaining a diverse community. While not specifically part of this study, of equal importance is the means by which the schools are addressing issues of equity and inclusion. Schools can be successful at attracting and even retaining faculty and staff of color; however, these individuals do not always feel as though they have a voice at the table. As noted by Bolger (2020), "Inclusion is not a natural consequence of diversity." Inclusion is a feeling of belonging, of being valued as a person, and of being given an opportunity to grow and learn. In the same way, equity is by no means assured when a school becomes more diverse. Bolger (2020) goes on to explain that "Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist, and that, as a result, we don't all start from the same place. Equity is a process that begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and makes a commitment to correct and address the imbalance." Many of the best practices identified in this study, including board leadership, a comprehensive exploration of existing practices, and a thorough review of compensation policies are applicable to the schools' equity and inclusion efforts. Additional research is needed to explore the ways in which exemplar schools are addressing issues of equity and inclusion and how these efforts complement the school's approaches to recruitment and retention.

Implications for practice

In Chapter 2, a target audience of those who might stand to benefit from this study was identified. This section discusses the implications of this study for each of these groups.

Boards of trustees

The findings in this study point to the significance of keeping the school pointed in the right direction with regard to diversity initiatives. Boards of trustees face many conflicting priorities when it comes to the strategic direction of the school and to the allocation of financial resources. To the extent that a school desires to make progress with regard to diversity recruitment and retention, the right signals need to be sent by the board. Boards must champion these efforts. Boards must be willing to evaluate their own practices. Boards must be willing to evaluate whether the stated mission of the school aligns with the school's best interests. Boards must be willing to allocate financial resources to support this work. Boards must hire a head of school who can shepherd this work. Boards must hold the head of school accountable, in some meaningful way, for progress on these initiatives. From their strategic vantage point, boards must also ensure that these efforts are integrated with one another.

Heads of school

While the findings in this study point to the value of distributed champions with regard to diversity work at the school, the head of school still has a vital role to play as the overseer of day-to-day operations on campus. Heads of school must do their own work, seeking to minimize biases or, at a minimum, to become more aware of them. In their hiring capacity, heads must seek to distribute responsibilities in such a way that diverse candidates are able to make their way through the hiring process. Heads must ensure that their managers are both informed and equipped to act equitably with regard to the faculty and staff operating in their domains,

including providing safe and meaningful ways in which to grow and develop. Heads must use their position to advocate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to both their school communities and to the broader external community. The head must also be willing to engage in the difficult conversations that are necessary to move a diversity agenda forward.

Teachers and future school leaders

Independent schools are on a learning curve with regard to implementing diversity initiatives. Teachers and school leaders have an opportunity to champion these initiatives and to prompt the leadership at the school to be more active in this arena. That being said, teachers and future school leaders need to be aware that this is often hard work and can meet with resistance. Persistence is a hallmark among those within schools who have seen diversity initiatives take root. Teachers and future school leaders also need to have a high degree of self-awareness and to know when they are feeling overwhelmed. To the extent that teachers and future school leaders, particularly those of color, are being asked to take on more, they should not be afraid to seek some form of compensation for these efforts.

Students

Students stand to be the ultimate beneficiaries of this work. To the extent that schools are willing and able to authentically integrate the practices described in this study into their day-to-day operations, students will find a richer academic experience. They will find that they are hearing from a greater diversity of voices, offering potentially very different perspectives on the subjects they are studying. Students of color will see more role models and, hopefully, a professional path forward for themselves.

Accreditors

The accreditation process, while highly prescriptive, is often ambiguous when it comes to diversity standards. It is appropriate that consideration be given to each individual school's context and mission. That being said, this study provides accreditors with a wide range of best practices against which a school's diversity initiatives could be compared and/or assessed. As noted earlier, these best practices need to be contextualized and each school is at a different place when it comes to diversity practices. Accreditors should use the progress being made in some schools to encourage other schools to act with greater urgency. Withholding accreditation for lack of progress on diversity initiatives should be a stick that is used, with discretion.

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to identify best practices in diversity recruitment and retention at Washington, DC area independent schools. To do so, I crafted a methodology to identify "exemplar" schools who, based on existing practices, had demonstrated both a commitment to diversity and success in attracting and retaining faculty and staff of color. As previously noted, for various reasons, schools were reluctant to participate in this study. Therefore, while the findings represent best practices at the two exemplar schools within which interviews were conducted, a broad array of additional best practices stand to be discovered through additional research at other schools.

Independent schools generally have one head of school, one board chair, and one diversity coordinator. I feel fortunate in that I was able to speak with each of these individuals at each of the two exemplar schools. Their insights, shaped by their experiences at their respective schools, were incredibly valuable and shed light on a complex subject. That being said, these individuals operate within a particular geographic context, serving a particular age and grade

range of students, and each brought their own life experiences to this research. As a result, there are inherent limitations in seeking to extrapolate these findings to other settings.

With regard to the others interviewed, each was chosen at random from a pool of eligible candidates. As with the head, board chair, and diversity coordinator, the selected faculty of color, staff of color, and member of the diversity committee shared valuable insights that informed and supported the identification of best practices. Others serving in other positions at the school would likely have offered equally valuable insights from differing vantage points which may have led to the identification of other practices.

This qualitative study included nearly 9 hours of interviews across the 12 participants. While each interview was transcribed verbatim, read, reviewed, and coded based on an emergent coding scheme, I am aware that substantive content from these interviews may not have been fully captured in the findings. I am also aware that my own preconceived notions and biases may have impacted both the coding scheme and the elements that were ultimately selected for inclusion in the findings. As a white male, I am mindful of the ways in which implicit biases, informed by the society in which I grew up, may also have contributed to my interpretation of certain findings. To the extent possible, I utilized direct quotes from those interviewed so that the thoughts expressed were not filtered through my experience, but rather reflected the lived experience of the people interviewed.

Conclusion

On February 2, 2021, The Chronicle of Higher Education released a report on the current state of racial diversity on college campuses. Their grim report highlights many of the same gaps that exist in Washington, DC-area independent schools: "... on most campuses, student populations have diversified steadily—people of color now make up nearly half of

undergraduates—while the faculty, staff, leadership, and boards haven't kept up" (Zamudio-Suarez, February 2, 2021). This report concludes with the following statements:

> Taken together, these . . . trends clearly paint a picture of inequity. Much of the time, students of color don't see themselves reflected in positions of power. That sends all the wrong messages. Why would students of color want to pursue academic careers when they see such disparities on campuses? Racial-representation gaps harm students — research show that a more diverse faculty produces better graduation rates across the board — and leave colleges unprepared to thrive in a nation that's on track to become majority-minority in the 21st century. (Zamudio-Suarez, February 2, 2021)

As noted in Chapter 1, significantly more research has been conducted at colleges and universities than has been undertaken in independent schools. That being said, many of the practices, principles, and disparities found in higher education are also found at the primary and secondary school levels. Unfortunately, the racial diversity gap among faculty and staff is one of those similarities. Interestingly, the Chronicle of Higher Education article referenced above ends with the author indicating that future reports will focus on institutions that are showing "signs of success." The topic under discussion in this study is current and relevant. It is, perhaps, even more relevant in light of tragic events that have taken place in this country since this research began.

This research was conducted at a particular time in our nation's ongoing struggle with race, racism, discrimination, and diversity. In the years since this research began, police shootings of black and brown men and women have not only garnered national headlines, they have sparked a mass movement. The nation's first black President finished out two terms in office only to be followed by a President whose provocative and racist rhetoric divided the

country. After a corrosive first term in office, the nation decided to go a different way and elected its first woman—and first woman of color—to be Vice President. Independent schools operate in this milieu. Independent schools are preparing a new generation of students to operate in this milieu. How they do so will determine our future. To the extent that these schools are able to create and sustain an environment and a school culture that represents the best of what our future will look like, they will have succeeded in their mission. The best practices identified in this paper could be a start in that direction.

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Appendix A

Web survey

Leadership and Diversity Survey

Default Question Block

Johns Hopkins University
Homewood Institutional Review Board (HIRB)

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Attitudes and Perceptions on Leadership and Diversity in Independent Schools

Researcher: Steven D. Greisdorf, Doctoral Student, Johns Hopkins University, School of Education

Date: March 31, 2014

Purpose of Research Study

This study attempts to collect information about attitudes and perceptions related to leadership and diversity.

Procedures

The questionnaire consists of 20 questions, plus four demographic questions, and will take approximately 20 minutes or less to complete. Questions are designed to determine attitudes and perceptions of Heads of School as they relate to their senior leadership team and, more specifically, to diversity on the senior leadership team. This questionnaire will be conducted with an online Qualtrics-created survey.

Risks/Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits for participants. However, it is hoped that through your participation, researchers will learn more about the pathway to leadership in independent schools.

Confidentiality

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the Johns Hopkins University Homewood Institutional Review Board and officials from government agencies such as the Office for Human Research Protections. (All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential.) Otherwise, records that identify you will

be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

All data obtained from participants will be kept confidential and will only be reported in an aggregate format (by reporting only combined results and never reporting individual ones). All questionnaires will be concealed, and no one other than then primary investigator will have access to them. The data collected will be stored in the HIPPA-compliant, Qualtrics-secure database until it has been deleted by the primary investigator.

Compensation

You will not receive any payment or other compensation for participating in this study.

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You choose whether to participate. If you decide not to participate, there are no penalties, and you will not lose any benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

If you choose to participate in the study, you can stop your participation at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits. If you want to withdraw from the study, please contact Dr. Stephen Pape, Director, JHU On-line Ed.D. Program, by phone or email: (410) 516-7953, stephen.pape@jhu.edu.

Questions about the Research

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Steven D. Greisdorf, at 301-675-5348, sgreisd1@jhu.edu.

Questions about your Rights as Research Participants

You can ask questions about this research study now or at any time during the study, by talking to the researcher(s) working with you or by contacting Dr. Stephen Pape via phone or email: (410) 516-7953, stephen.pape@jhu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or feel that you have not been treated fairly, please call the Homewood Institutional Review Board at Johns Hopkins University at (410) 516-6580.

By clicking "Yes" you are indicating that you understand the information in this consent form. Selecting "Yes" also means that you agree to participate in the study.

By selecting "Yes", you have not waived any legal rights you otherwise would have as a participant in a research study.

I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

How long have you been serving as the Head of School at your current school?

0-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10-12 years	Greater than 12 years
○	○	○	○	○

How long have you been serving as a Head of School at any school?

0-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10-12 years	Greater than 12 years
○	○	○	○	○

Immediately prior to becoming a Head of School, what was your position?

Why did you choose to work in an independent school?

At what stage in life did you formulate a career plan that included becoming a Head of School?

- ○ At college
- ○ In graduate school
- ○ On becoming a teacher
- ○ On becoming a school administrator
- ○ While serving on a School Board of Trustees
- ○ Other

What or who has had a major influence on your career path (check all that apply):

- [ ] Parents
- [ ] Friends
- [ ] Domestic circumstances
- [ ] Spouse/Partner
- [ ] Former teacher
- [ ] Other Heads of School
- [ ] Career Counselor/Search Consultant
- [ ] Other

Why do you think you were successful in such a competitive field (Select one)?

- ○ Through hard work
- ○ Knowing what you wanted from life
- ○ Support from others
- ○ Academic achievement
- ○ Professional networking
- ○ Accumulating related experiences
- ○ Other

For purposes of this survey, senior leadership positions include: Assistant/Associate Head of School, Chief and Director level positions, Deans, and Division Heads.

In considering the qualities and characteristics of the members of your senior leadership team, please rate the following in terms of your perception of their importance to the school:

	Not important	Moderately unimportant	Neutral	Moderately important	Strongly important
Intellectual curiosity	○	○	○	○	○
Strategic insight	○	○	○	○	○
Decision-making	○	○	○	○	○
Problem solving	○	○	○	○	○
Willingness to learn	○	○	○	○	○

Emotional intelligence	○	○	○	○	○
Adaptability	○	○	○	○	○
Results orientation	○	○	○	○	○
Perseverance	○	○	○	○	○
Dedication	○	○	○	○	○
Motivation to lead	○	○	○	○	○
Self-promotion	○	○	○	○	○
Stakeholder sensitivity	○	○	○	○	○

In considering candidates for senior leadership roles, please rate the significance of each of these factors:

	Not significant	Moderately insignificant	Neutral	Moderately significant	Strongly significant	I don't know
Formal education	○	○	○	○	○	○
Prior work experience	○	○	○	○	○	○
Prior experience at this school	○	○	○	○	○	○
Personal appearance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recommendations	○	○	○	○	○	○
Appearance of resume	○	○	○	○	○	○
Content of resume	○	○	○	○	○	○
Appearance of cover letter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Content of cover letter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Written communication skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
Verbal communication skills	○	○	○	○	○	○
Team player	○	○	○	○	○	○

Please list other factors that you consider when filling senior leadership positions:

When it comes to filling senior leadership roles at the school, are you the final decision maker in

making the hiring decision?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ I don't know

When seeking to fill senior administrative positions, please indicate which of the following strategies you regularly employ:

	Yes	No	I don't know
School's website	◯	◯	◯
IE Website	◯	◯	◯
AIMS website	◯	◯	◯
NAIS website	◯	◯	◯
NBOA website	◯	◯	◯
Other association websites	◯	◯	◯
Search consultants	◯	◯	◯
Craig's List	◯	◯	◯
Newspaper ad (paper or on-line)	◯	◯	◯
Job fairs	◯	◯	◯
Campus recruiting	◯	◯	◯
Ethnic newspapers	◯	◯	◯
Ethnic websites	◯	◯	◯

Please list other key strategies that you use to fill senior leadership positions:

The next series of questions begin to focus on the issue of diversity at your school and attitudes toward diversity.

	Yes	No	I don't know
Does your school have a written policy on diversity?	○	○	○
Does your school have a Board-level diversity committee?	○	○	○
Does your school have a non-Board committee on diversity?	○	○	○
Does your school have specific programming in place to promote diversity at your school?	○	○	○
Does your school have specific programming in place to support families of color?	○	○	○
Does your school have specific programming in place to support faculty or staff of color?	○	○	○
To your knowledge, is there anything written in the school's By-laws that specifically excludes a person or group of people from serving in a senior leadership position?	○	○	○

Taken as a whole, the **entire school community** (students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators) is diverse across the following categories:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
Gender	○	○	○	○	○	○
Race	○	○	○	○	○	○
Religion	○	○	○	○	○	○
Socio-economic status	○	○	○	○	○	○
Learning styles	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ethnicity	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○
Education	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lived experiences	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical appearance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical ability	○	○	○	○	○	○

The **teaching faculty** in my school are diverse across the following categories:

	Strongly	Moderately		Moderately

	disagree	disagree	Neutral	agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
Gender	○	○	○	○	○	○
Race	○	○	○	○	○	○
Religion	○	○	○	○	○	○
Socio-economic status	○	○	○	○	○	○
Learning styles	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ethnicity	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○
Education	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lived experiences	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical appearance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical ability	○	○	○	○	○	○

The **senior administrators** in my school are diverse across the following categories:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
Gender	○	○	○	○	○	○
Race	○	○	○	○	○	○
Religion	○	○	○	○	○	○
Socio-economic status	○	○	○	○	○	○
Learning styles	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ethnicity	○	○	○	○	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○	○	○	○	○
Education	○	○	○	○	○	○
Lived experiences	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical appearance	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical ability	○	○	○	○	○	○

In my opinion, diversity is considered in:

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree	I don't know
Faculty hiring practices	○	○	○	○	○	○
Senior leadership hiring practices	○	○	○	○	○	○

The selection of Board of Trustee members	○	○	○	○	○	○
Admissions practices	○	○	○	○	○	○
Advertising/marketing practices	○	○	○	○	○	○
Professional development opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Curricular initiatives	○	○	○	○	○	○

Click to write the question text

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
Diversity is a strategic priority at my school	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe it is important to have a diverse senior leadership team	○	○	○	○	○	○
I consider my senior leadership team to be diverse	○	○	○	○	○	○

What percentage of those serving on your senior leadership team are people of color?

0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-100%
○	○	○	○	○

The following four questions are about you.

Your age:

<30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60
○	○	○	○	○

Your gender:

Male	Female
○	○

Your race:

- ◯ African-American
- ◯ Asian-American
- ◯ Caucasian
- ◯ Hispanic
- ◯ Middle Eastern American
- ◯ Native American
- ◯ Multi-racial
- ◯ Other

Your educational attainment (Please select highest level achieved)

- ◯ High School Diploma
- ◯ Associate Degree
- ◯ Bachelor's Degree
- ◯ Master's Degree
- ◯ Doctoral Degree

Would you be willing to be contacted to participate in a brief follow-up interview about leadership and diversity?
If so, please complete the form below.

Name	
School	
E-mail address	
Best phone number	

Appendix B

Head of school interview questions

1. What do you enjoy most about working at this school?
2. What do you enjoy most about your position as head of school?
3. To what do you attribute your success as a leader?
4. What are the key values you are seeking to promote at your school?
5. What is your personal philosophy about diversity?
6. What do you believe your role is in promoting diversity at your school?
7. When you think about filling senior leadership positions, to what extent do you consider diversity in the hiring process?
8. What are your thoughts about ways in which to increase the pool of candidates, specifically candidates of color, who apply for senior leadership positions?
9. What do you do, personally, to help others develop their careers?

Appendix C

Text of survey e-mail

Dear ,

My name is Steven Greisdorf and I am the Assistant Head of School at The Harbor School in Bethesda, MD. I am also pursuing my doctoral degree through Johns Hopkins University. This semester, we are collecting data as part of a Research Methods course. This data will inform both my research and a possible intervention as I work on my applied dissertation.

The focus of my research is on leadership and diversity. In this regard, I have developed a brief survey to assess attitudes and perceptions related to both topics. The survey contains 20 questions (plus four demographic questions). Most of the questions are simply check boxes; a few are open-ended and provide space for additional input. I anticipate that the survey will take about 20 minutes or less to complete.

The survey is confidential, as noted in the Informed Consent Form that appears immediately before the survey. That being said, you will be given the opportunity at the end of the survey to indicate whether you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. This information will be disaggregated from the survey itself so as not to be able to attribute survey results to an individual.

To participate in the survey, please click on the link below.

FOLLOW THIS LINK TO THE SURVEY:
Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://qtrial.qualtrics.com/WRQualtricsSurveyEngine/?SID=SV_51IDUFMlxy16pH7&Preview=Survey&_=1

THE SURVEY WILL BE ACTIVE UNTIL FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2014.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact me at sgreisd1@jhu.edu or 301-675-5348.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and for your willingness to assist in this study.

Best regards,

STEVEN GREISDORF
Doctoral Student
Johns Hopkins University
sgreisd1@jhu.edu

Appendix D

Survey results

Last Modified: 04/17/2014

Filter By: Report Subgroup

1. By clicking "Yes" you are indicating that you understand the information in this consent form. Selecting "Yes" also means that you agree to participate in the study. By selecting "Yes", you have not waived any legal rights you otherwise would have as a participant in a research study. I have read, understood, and printed a copy of, the above consent form and desire of my own free will to participate in this study.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		34	100%
2	No		0	0%
	Total		34	100%

2. How long have you been serving as the head of school at your current school?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	0-3 years		8	22%
2	4-6 years		10	28%
3	7-9 years		8	22%
4	10-12 years		4	11%
5	Greater than 12 years		6	17%
	Total		36	100%

3. How long have you been serving as a head of school at any school?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	0-3 years		5	14%
2	4-6 years		6	17%
3	7-9 years		5	14%
4	10-12 years		5	14%
5	Greater than 12 years		15	42%
	Total		36	100%

4. Immediately prior to becoming a head of school, what was your position?

Text Response
Assistant Head of School
Assistant Headmaster
Assistant Head of School
Teacher
Assistant Head of School
Upper School Head
Associate Head and CFO
Assistant Head of School for Institutional Advancement
Head of Upper School
Director of Admissions at another school
Attorney at law
Division Head as Head of Nursery School, St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School
Assistant Head and Director of Admission
Assistant Principal of Upper School
Associate Head of School
Public School District Administrator
Teacher/Administrator at another school.
Middle School Principal at a large independent school
Assistant Head of School
Director of Admission
Division Director
Director of International Program
I was an MBA student
Assistant Head
Judaic Studies Coordinator
Upper School Director
My career had been in securities regulation; first on Wall Street and then on K Street. My transition to Head of School was possible as I was a Board Chair for the independent school (k -8) that my children attended.
Assistant Head at another school
Administrative Director
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Teacher, coach, chief GL advisor
Assistant Head of School
teacher in a lower school
Teacher
teacher

5. Why did you choose to work in an independent school?

Text Response
To make a difference, autonomy, community, innovative educational problem-solving
Freedom, flexibility, and religious values.
I appreciate the autonomy inherient in indepdent schools
Was offered an opportunity because my child went to the school.
At the time there were no jobs in public schools in the city where I lived.
Many reasons: freedom to pursue academic work, to practice faith, did not desire a degree in education, many more
To be able to teach and coach when I didn't have certification required to do so in public schools
Curricular freedom, site based management.
Originally, familiarity due to my own education.
First job out of college, one thing led to another. Few concious choices at age 22!
Methodology, core value
It offered the best quality early childhood teaching experiences available, especially in the area of ECE science education. I did not have to have a teaching license; my MA in ECE and Human Development was sufficient.
Autonomy and resources
As a music major, but not talented enough to pursue a performance career, I had limited career options. Working in a school seemed like a good way to be productive and make a positive difference.
It chose me.
Mission Matched my Mission
Was offered job by head of new school that I met at a camp he ran.
I attended an independent school from 8th grade through graduation. My old prep school offered me a chance to return right out of college. My wife and I accepted the opportunity to be Houseparents and to work there, only thinking we would do it for a year. We fell in love with the school and my career grew from there.
When graduating from college, I found it hard to get a job in the public school system and had my first opportunity at an excellent girls school to do admissions and some teaching.
For the ability to make meaningful and positive contributions to the lives of children.
Autonomy, creativity, interesting curriculum, great facilities, superb collegial communities, intentional diversity
Began career in Quito Ecuador, where public school was not an option for me.
I find the work serving children gratifying and important; schools are enjoyable work settings; the independence and autonomy in terms of decisions and curriculum promotes creativity and the ability to serve children -- ie I don't want to be beholden to govt entites; ability to serve in a religiously oriented entity
I decided to work in jewish day schools to transmit the Jewish religion and culture to the next generation. it just happens that Jewish day schools are independent schools...
I attended independent schools myself. When I began teaching, it was logical to seek a job in an independent school. As so many independent school graduates will hold leadership positions in society, we have an obligation to educate them well.
I'm passionate about educating today's youth; I believe in the independent school model; and I love the business aspects of an independent school. The Board that hired me was looking for a CEO - I am the orchestra leader and look to hire leaders who complement my strengths and weaknesses.
I began teaching in an independent school at a time when public school teaching positions were hard to find. I also found an independent school with a philosophy that was very appealing to me. I liked the sense of community and common vision, plus the close relationships with kids and families.
Opportunity to work in a mission driven institution with a philosophy of education in which I believed.
Flexibility, creativity, value-alignment
The flexibility and creativity that independent schools afford you; the ability to make decisions based on the best interest of your students; the ability to teach to the whole child

the impact my indep school upbringing and education had on me; close relationships with teachers, coaches and advisors from middle school on...
I like the quality of education provided by independent schools and especially like being part of a faith-based school.
I enjoy the freedoms associated with working in an independent school.
Professionalism
I am appointed by the French gvt

6. At what stage in life did you formulate a career plan that included becoming a head of school?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	At college		0	0%
2	In graduate school		1	3%
3	On becoming a teacher		5	14%
4	On becoming a school administrator		17	47%
5	While serving on a School board of trustees		0	0%
6	Other		13	36%
	Total		36	100%

Other
While working in another field
Grade school
I really never thought about being a leader until I was asked to be.
after many years as a teacher
After being an administrator for six years or so
I founded the school. During Leave
Completing the AIMS/JHU course
I was a school administrator, and still did not consider becoming a Head until it was suggested to me by others.
after i was offered a job as a head of school
At my 10 year evaluation, we had to do a self evaluation. One of the questions was focused around where we saw ourselves 5 or 10 years down the road. For some reason that hit me and I started to think about being a school head.
It evolved over time - no one spot
It was not part of my career plan. It came as an opportunity that i did not expect
I was approached by a consultant who was leading a national search.

7. What or who has had a major influence on your career path (check all that apply):

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Parents		13	36%
2	Friends		11	31%
3	Domestic circumstances		4	11%
4	Spouse/Partner		17	47%
5	Former teacher		15	42%
6	Other Heads of School		29	81%
7	Career Counselor/Search Consultant		4	11%
8	Other		4	11%

Other
colleagues
Truly - I am a life long learner!
Administrative Colleague
Mentor

8. Why do you think you were successful in such a competitive field (Select one)?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Through hard work		10	28%
2	Knowing what you wanted from life		0	0%
3	Support from others		5	14%
4	Academic achievement		0	0%
5	Professional networking		1	3%
6	Accumulating related experiences		12	33%
7	Other		8	22%
	Total		36	100%

Other
Confidence, effort, and the privileges of being an independent school "insider" and being in the right place at the right time early in my career
Passion for sharing learning experiences with children; accumulating a wide set of skills across many years; excellent communication skills.
My ability to connect with people and communicate well.
Qualities of character: honesty, directness, patience, diligence, enthusiasm.
The jury is still out
Natural
creative and adventuresome spirit
Really it is multiple: networks, experience, support

9. For purposes of this survey, senior leadership positions include: Assistant/Associate Head of School, Chief and Director level positions, Deans, and Division Heads.
In considering the qualities and characteristics of the members of your senior leadership team, please rate the following in terms of your perception of their importance to the school:

#	Question	Not important	Moderately unimportant	Neutral	Moderately important	Strongly important	Total Responses	Mean
1	Intellectual curiosity	0	0	1	8	26	35	4.71
2	Strategic insight	0	0	1	9	25	35	4.69
3	Decision-making	0	0	0	7	28	35	4.80
4	Problem solving	0	0	0	4	31	35	4.89
5	Willingness to learn	0	0	0	4	31	35	4.89
6	Emotional intelligence	0	0	0	2	33	35	4.94
7	Adaptability	0	0	0	9	26	35	4.74
8	Results orientation	0	0	4	20	11	35	4.20
9	Perseverance	0	0	0	6	29	35	4.83
10	Dedication	0	0	0	6	29	35	4.83
11	Motivation to lead	0	0	4	19	12	35	4.23
12	Self-promotion	6	11	10	7	1	35	2.60
13	Stakeholder sensitivity	0	0	3	18	14	35	4.31

10. In considering candidates for senior leadership roles, please rate the significance of each of these factors:

#	Question	Not significant	Moderately insignificant	Neutral	Moderately significant	Strongly significant	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Formal education	0	0	4	20	10	0	34	4.18
2	Prior work experience	0	1	1	8	23	0	33	4.61
3	Prior experience at this school	4	7	9	10	5	0	35	3.14
4	Personal appearance	0	3	7	19	6	0	35	3.80
5	Recommendations	0	0	0	15	20	0	35	4.57
6	Appearance of resume	0	4	8	16	6	0	34	3.71
7	Content of resume	0	1	0	15	17	1	34	4.50
8	Appearance of cover letter	0	4	7	17	6	0	34	3.74
9	Content of cover letter	0	3	1	15	15	0	34	4.24
10	Written communication skills	0	0	0	5	25	4	34	4.97
11	Verbal communication skills	0	0	0	1	27	6	34	5.15
12	Team player	0	0	0	2	27	5	34	5.09

11. Please list other factors that you consider when filling senior leadership positions:

Text Response
Diversity, growth mindset
Fit
cultural fit philosophical match
Excellent soft skills, hardworking , creative.
To the extent I can discover it, temperament and outlook on life. I want people who are positive (though realistic) and balanced.
devotion, passion, sense of personal purpose and mission, a sense of personal balance and maturity
Understanding of independent school culture
Authenticity, comfortable with self.
Humor, flexible thinking, good listening skills and strong communicator of ideas, creativity, willingness to "just dive in" and an "I can take care of that" attitude. Has to love animals and getting dirty; plumbing knowledge a plus. Oh, and did I say a sense of humor?
Class, age, and world experience
resilience, sense of humor, record of success in leadership positions.
Student-centeredness
Proven ability onsite to provide the leadership
Willingness to be an active participant in school life- attend concerts, games, events, etc. whenever possible.
Cultural sensitivity, dedication to our Mission, sense of humor, ability to listen and work collaboratively, able to take risk, park ego at the door
Collaborative skills. Time management. Ability to meet deadlines.
I look for people that bring qualities that don't already exist on my team. I prefer to work with people that are complement each other and don't all have the same strengths.
ability to communicate; initial "blink" impression; energy; positive approach; compassion
commitment to mission knowledge of content area they will supervise personal warmth
a sense of humor; love of kids; compatibility with other members of the team
I'm looking for passion, a strong work ethic, intellectual curiosity, a collaborative spirit, someone who can clearly articulate their strengths and weaknesses, humility, humor, self-discipline, someone who possesses active listening skills and someone who can ask meaningful questions.....
I look for the fit between the school's mission and the leader's educational/leadership philosophy.
Thoughtfulness, ability to listen, initiative, resourcefulness, innovation, coaching skills, management skills, interpersonal skills, sense of humor, confidentiality
Commitment to mission of school; commitment to diversity & equity work; growth-mindedness; problem solving skills; thoughtfulness; interpersonal skills
Judgment. Emotional intelligence. Integrity. Honesty. Ability to grow from mistakes, accept feedback....
People who demonstrate good professional judgement.
Non anxious

12. When it comes to filling senior leadership roles at the school, are you the final decision maker in making the hiring decision?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		34	97%
2	No		1	3%
3	I don't know		0	0%
	Total		35	100%

13. When seeking to fill senior administrative positions, please indicate which of the following strategies you regularly employ:

#	Question	Yes	No	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	School's website	25	9	0	34	1.26
2	IE Website	30	1	1	32	1.09
3	AIMS website	21	7	1	29	1.31
4	NAIS website	22	7	1	30	1.30
5	NBOA website	15	13	3	31	1.61
6	Other association websites	19	9	2	30	1.43
7	Search consultants	23	9	0	32	1.28
8	Craig's List	10	18	0	28	1.64
9	Newspaper ad (paper or on-line)	9	20	0	29	1.69
10	Job fairs	17	12	1	30	1.47
11	Campus recruiting	4	22	1	27	1.89
12	Ethnic newspapers	6	20	1	27	1.81
13	Ethnic websites	9	18	2	29	1.76

14. Please list other key strategies that you use to fill senior leadership positions:

Text Response
personal networks
Referrals
I prefer to grow my own leaders so I begin very early by helping new hires think about their careers and I try to provide opportunities for them to grow inside the school. I would rarely hire a senior administrator (business officer might be an exception) from outside the school
We often look internally first
Promotion from within, networking,
Personal/professional networks
We have not had any positions to fill in about 5 years. Would use both NAIS and IE, as well as the National Episcopal School's site in the future.
Area networking
NAES web site
LinkedIn, personal contacts of current employees, peer recommendations
We promote from within
Occasionally we will use the Chronicle of Higher Education
letters to colleagues, phone calls to key players, local colleges and universities.
Colleagues at other schools.
Word of mouth and interpersonal relationships; other heads of school; we will plan to use ethnic papers and search consultants going forward; several of our senior leadership have come from within
Word of mouth
listservs and sometimes school facebook and linkedin pages
I reach out to those in my network, internally and externally, and share the position I have open and the type of person I'm looking for.
We use Carney Sandoe and Southern Teachers regularly for most positions. On occasion, we hire consultants to help us, particularly when hiring for a position where I have limited background, such as a Development Director.
networking, internal promotion
networking; internal capacity
Always strive to interview a diverse field of candidates.

15. The next series of questions begin to focus on the issue of diversity at your school and attitudes toward diversity.

#	Question	Yes	No	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Does your school have a written policy on diversity?	27	8	0	35	1.23
2	Does your school have a Board-level diversity committee?	13	22	0	35	1.63
3	Does your school have a non-Board committee on diversity?	19	16	0	35	1.46
4	Does your school have specific programming in place to promote diversity at your school?	25	10	0	35	1.29
5	Does your school have specific programming in place to support families of color?	13	22	0	35	1.63
6	Does your school have specific programming in place to support faculty or staff of color?	10	25	0	35	1.71

7	To your knowledge, is there anything written in the school's By-laws that specifically excludes a person or group of people from serving in a senior leadership position?	1	33	1	35	2.00

16. Taken as a whole, the entire school community (students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators) is diverse across the following categories:

#	Question	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Gender	6	1	0	5	22	0	34	4.06
2	Race	2	5	1	10	16	0	34	3.97
3	Religion	4	1	2	11	15	1	34	4.03
4	Socio-economic status	3	3	1	15	12	0	34	3.88
5	Learning styles	2	0	4	13	15	0	34	4.15
6	Ethnicity	1	5	4	9	15	0	34	3.94
7	Sexual orientation	3	6	3	11	8	3	34	3.71
8	Education	1	9	7	11	5	1	34	3.38
9	Lived experiences	1	7	3	14	7	2	34	3.74
10	Physical appearance	1	5	10	10	7	1	34	3.59
11	Physical ability	9	8	5	7	4	1	34	2.76

17. The teaching faculty in my school are diverse across the following categories:

#	Question	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Gender	5	7	1	10	8	0	31	3.29
2	Race	3	8	6	12	3	0	32	3.13
3	Religion	2	5	8	11	5	1	32	3.47
4	Socio-economic status	1	5	8	12	5	1	32	3.56
5	Learning styles	2	8	9	9	1	1	30	3.07
6	Ethnicity	2	6	5	14	3	0	30	3.33
7	Sexual orientation	5	5	1	10	7	3	31	3.58
8	Education	3	10	1	15	3	0	32	3.16
9	Lived experiences	1	6	5	7	12	1	32	3.81
10	Physical appearance	0	7	8	13	3	1	32	3.47
11	Physical ability	10	6	5	9	1	1	32	2.63

18. The senior administrators in my school are diverse across the following categories:

#	Question	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Gender	5	5	3	8	11	0	32	3.47
2	Race	11	10	2	5	5	0	33	2.48
3	Religion	5	9	6	7	2	3	32	3.03
4	Socio-economic status	3	6	7	15	2	0	33	3.21
5	Learning styles	2	7	5	14	2	3	33	3.48
6	Ethnicity	7	10	7	6	3	0	33	2.64
7	Sexual orientation	14	4	8	2	3	2	33	2.45
8	Education	5	7	3	17	1	0	33	3.06
9	Lived experiences	3	4	5	10	10	1	33	3.70
10	Physical appearance	0	8	14	6	4	1	33	3.27
11	Physical ability	12	6	7	5	2	1	33	2.45

19. In my opinion, diversity is considered in:

#	Question	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately agree	Strongly agree	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Faculty hiring practices	2	0	1	9	21	0	33	4.42
2	Senior leadership hiring practices	2	0	2	11	18	0	33	4.30
3	The selection of Board of Trustee members	1	0	2	10	19	1	33	4.48
4	Admissions practices	2	0	1	8	22	0	33	4.45
5	Advertising/marketing practices	1	0	3	14	15	0	33	4.27
6	Professional development opportunities	2	2	3	13	13	0	33	4.00
7	Curricular initiatives	1	1	4	17	10	0	33	4.03

20. Click to write the question text

#	Question	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neutral	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know	Total Responses	Mean
1	Diversity is a strategic priority at my school	2	0	3	11	17	0	33	4.24
2	I believe it is important to have a diverse senior leadership team	0	1	2	9	21	0	33	4.52
3	I consider my senior leadership team to be diverse	7	9	6	3	8	0	33	2.88

21. What percentage of those serving on your senior leadership team are people of color?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	0-20%		22	67%
2	21-40%		8	24%
3	41-60%		3	9%
4	61-80%		0	0%
5	81-100%		0	0%
	Total		33	100%

22. The following four questions are about you.Your age:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	<30		1	3%
2	31-40		1	3%
3	41-50		11	32%
4	51-60		12	35%
5	>60		9	26%
	Total		34	100%

23. Your gender:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Male		17	50%
2	Female		17	50%
	Total		34	100%

24. Your race:

#	Answer		Response	%
1	African-American		2	6%
2	Asian-American		0	0%
3	Caucasian		30	88%
4	Hispanic		1	3%
5	Middle Eastern American		1	3%
6	Native American		0	0%
7	Multi-racial		0	0%
8	Other		0	0%
	Total		34	100%

Other

25. Your educational attainment (Please select highest level achieved)

#	Answer		Response	%
1	High School Diploma		0	0%
2	Associate Degree		0	0%
3	Bachelor's Degree		2	6%
4	Master's Degree		24	75%
5	Doctoral Degree		6	19%
	Total		32	100%

Appendix E

Case study protocol

A. Overview of the case study

1. The goal of the multiple-case study is to answer the following research question: What practices have exemplar independent schools implemented that have contributed to the school's ability to attract and retain a racially diverse group of teachers and administrators?
2. The proposition is that the head of school will be identified as a critical feature of those schools that have made more progress when it comes to diversifying their teaching and administrative teams. As hiring and retention practices, not to mention overall school culture, is part of a dynamic system, there may be alternative factors identified and which may serve as rival explanations. The case will seek to identify these and explain their presence either in support of the proposition or as a rival explanation.
3. Social constructivism, along with Critical Race Theory, will serve as the theoretical framework for the multiple-case study. The research will focus on the dynamics associated with the system and how individuals in the system are both learning from experience and overcoming the structural elements of racism present in the society in which the system is embedded.
4. The aim of the protocol is to focus the researcher on the research question and not to seek answers to other issues that may or may not be part of the system. Additionally, the protocol aims to ensure that each of the cases within the multiple-case study will be addressed in a similar manner, adding validity and reliability to the results.

B. Data collection procedures

1. The researcher's name is Steven Greisdorf. He will be the sole person conducting the observations and the interviews as well as the sole person analyzing the data.
2. Data collection plan
    a. Evidence will take multiple forms
        i. Material found on the school's website (looking specifically for evidence of various races being represented)
        ii. Interviews
            1. Head of school
            2. Board chairperson or designee
            3. Diversity Coordinator
            4. Diversity Committee member
            5. Teacher of Color
            6. Administrator of Color
3. Expected preparation prior to interviews
    a. Review website for content related to diversity
        i. Diversity statement
        ii. Description of diversity initiatives
        iii. Photos of teachers and/or administrators
    b. Line up interview schedule

C. Data collection: Questions and evaluation

1. Data collection from website
    a. Is there evidence of a commitment to diversity on the website?
    b. What form does that evidence take?

i. Photographs of students/teachers/administrators of different races?

ii. Videos that include the voices and images of individuals from different races?

iii. Words that are used to describe the school's commitment to diversity and specific actions that the school is taking?

2. Data collection from interviews

   a. Interview with the head of school

      i. How long have you served in this position?

      ii. As the head of school, what do you see as your primary role?

      iii. What attracted you to this school?

      iv. What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?

      v. What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?

      vi. Why is diversity important to this school?

      vii. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?

      viii. Who or what is the greatest champion for diversity at the school?

      ix. Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?

      x. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?

      xi. Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?

xii. Looking ahead, what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges to furthering this commitment?

b. Interview with the Board President or designee
    i. How long have you served in this position?
    ii. As the Board President, what do you see as your primary role?
    iii. What attracted you to this school?
    iv. What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?
    v. What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?
    vi. Why is diversity important to this school?
    vii. Who or what is the champion for diversity at the school?
    viii. Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?
    ix. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?
    x. Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?
    xi. Looking ahead, what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges to furthering this commitment?

c. Interview with the diversity coordinator
    i. How long have you served in this position?
    ii. As the diversity coordinator, what do you see as your primary role?
    iii. What attracted you to this school?

iv. What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?

v. What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?

vi. Why is diversity important to this school?

vii. Who or what is the champion for diversity at the school?

viii. Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?

ix. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?

x. Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?

xi. Looking ahead, what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges to furthering this commitment?

d. Interview with diversity committee member

i. How long have you served in this position?

ii. As a member of the diversity committee, what do you see as your primary role?

iii. What attracted you to this school?

iv. What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?

v. What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?

vi. Why is diversity important to this school?

vii. Who or what is the champion for diversity at the school?

viii. Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?

ix. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?

x. Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?

xi. Looking ahead, what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges to furthering this commitment?

e. Interview with teacher of color

i. How long have you served in this position?

ii. What attracted you to this school?

iii. What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?

iv. What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?

v. Why is diversity important to this school?

vi. Who or what is the champion for diversity at the school?

vii. Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?

viii. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?

ix. Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?

x. Looking ahead, what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges to furthering this commitment?

f. Interview with administrator of color

i. How long have you served in this position?

ii. What attracted you to this school?

iii. What would you say that it is that attracts families to this school?

iv. What would you say that it is that attracts faculty and staff to this school?

v. Why is diversity important to this school?

vi. Who or what is the champion for diversity at the school?

vii. Are there some key qualities or characteristics that you feel this champion employs in support of the school's commitment to diversity?

viii. What are some of the approaches that the school has employed to demonstrate and achieve this commitment?

ix. Are there things that you would like to see done at the school regarding diversity that have not yet been undertaken? What stands in the way of implementing these ideas?

x. Looking ahead, what do you perceive to be the greatest challenges to furthering this commitment?

(Note: It is anticipated that these overarching questions will lead to additional, probing questions that will help to further explain the phenomenon at the school.)

3. Evaluation

a. The researcher, Steven Greisdorf, will audio- and video-record interviews with the aforementioned individuals

b. Interviews will be transcribed verbatim.

c. Interviews will be coded based on topics or themes that emerge from the research for cross-case synthesis.

d. The data obtained through the observations and interviews will be compared to the proposition.

e. Rival explanations will be presented and evaluated.

D. Guide for the case study report

1. The primary audience for this report is the community of scholar practitioners, particularly those involved—directly or indirectly—in diversity initiatives in independent schools. The final report will take the form of a dissertation, a component of the Doctor of Education program at Johns Hopkins University.
2. The prescriptive nature of the dissertation document will guide the format of the report and the exhibits to be developed. It is expected that these exhibits will include the key words used as part of the coding of interviews, a list of documents examined, a list of the individuals interviewed, any relevant dates that pertain to the research or the research question.

Appendix F

Solicitation e-mail to head of school

Dear _____,

My name is Steven Greisdorf and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. I am conducting research on diversity in independent schools for the purpose of highlighting strategies and approaches that have been successful in attracting and retaining people of color as independent school administrators and teachers. After a rigorous screening process which included a review of your school's website, membership in various organizations, and participation in diversity-related activities, your school was identified as having demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. For this reason, I would like to explore the possibility of using your school as part of a multiple-case study that will form the basis of my dissertation work.

My research would include 45-60 minute on-line interviews via Zoom with six members of your school community: you (as Head of School), the Board President (or his/her designee), the Diversity Coordinator, a member of the Diversity Committee, a teacher of color, and an administrator of color. The questions that would be asked of each person would be similar and I am happy to share those in advance, if that would be helpful. The focus of the questions is on the culture of the school, specifically around issues of diversity.

To maintain the integrity of the research, the name of the school and all those participating would remain anonymous. I would ask for permission to audio and video record the interviews. These interviews would remain in the sole possession of myself and only be accessed by me and the Principal Investigator for this research, Dr. Eric Rice (Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Education). No individuals would be personally identified.

If you are open to participating in this research, or if you have any questions about the proposed research, please contact me at sgreisd1@jh.edu or 301-675-5348.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Steven D. Greisdorf

Appendix G

Solicitation e-mail sent to prospective participants

Dear _____,

My name is Steven Greisdorf and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. I am conducting research on diversity in independent schools for the purpose of highlighting strategies and approaches that have been successful in attracting and retaining people of color as independent school administrators and teachers. After a rigorous screening process which included a review of your school's website, membership in various organizations, and participation in diversity-related activities, your school was identified as having demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. [HOS name] has agreed to participate this study and to allow members of the [School Name] community to participate.

My research includes a 45-60 minute on-line interviews via Zoom with six members of the school community: the Head of School, the Board President (or his/her designee), the Diversity Coordinator, a member of the Diversity Committee, a teacher of color, and an administrator of color. The questions that would be asked of each person would be similar and I am happy to share those in advance, if that would be helpful. The focus of the questions is on the culture of the school, specifically around issues of diversity.

To maintain the integrity of the research, the name of the school and all those participating would remain anonymous. I will be audio and video recording the interviews. These interviews would remain in the sole possession of myself and only be accessed by me and the Principal Investigator for this research, Dr. Eric Rice (Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University School of Education). No individuals would be personally identified in either the transcript or the interview or the final work.

If you are open to participating in this research, or if you have any questions about the proposed research, please contact me at sgreisd1@jh.edu or 301-675-5348.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Steven D. Greisdorf